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THE LIFE
OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

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April 2001

THE LIFE
OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

TOGETHER WITH

A JOURNAL OF A TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES,

By JAMES BOSWELL.

A REPRINT OF THE FIRST EDITION

TO WHICH ARE ADDED MR BOSWELL'S CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS, ISSUED
IN 1792, THE VARIATIONS OF THE SECOND EDITION, WITH SOME
OF THE AUTHOR'S NOTES PREPARED FOR THE THIRD THE WHOLE

EDITED, WITH NEW NOTES,

BY

PERCY FITZGERALD, M A., F S A.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL II

SECOND EDITION WITH A PREFACE BY THE EDITOR, AND A BOSWELL
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THE LIFE

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

DR. JOHNSON revised some sheets of Lord Hailes's "Annals of Scotland," and wrote a few notes on the margin with red ink, which he bade me tell his Lordship did not sink into the paper, and might be wiped off with a wet sponge, so that he did not spoil his manuscript. I told him there were very few of his friends so accurate as that I could venture to put down in writing what they told me as his sayings. JOHNSON. "Why should you write down *my* sayings?" BOSWELL. "I write them when they are good." JOHNSON. "Nay, you may as well write down the sayings of any one else that are good." But *where*, I might with great propriety have added, can I find such?

I visited him by appointment in the evening,¹ and we drank tea with Mrs. Williams. He told me that he had been in the company of a gentleman whose extraordinary travels had been much the subject of conversation.² But I found that he had not listened to him with that full confidence, without which there is little satisfaction in the society of travellers. I was curious to hear what opinion so able a judge as Johnson had formed of his abilities, and I asked if he was not a man of sense. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, he is not a distinct relater, and I should say, he is neither abounding nor deficient in sense. I did not perceive any superiority of understanding." BOSWELL. "But will you not allow him a nobleness of resolution, in penetrating into distant regions?" JOHNSON. "That,

¹ Of Saturday, April 1, 1775

² The traveller Bruce.

Sir, is not to the present purpose: we are talking of his se' fighting cock has a nobleness of resolution."

Next day, Sunday, April 2, I dined with him at Mr Hool. talked of Pope. JOHNSON. "He wrote his 'Dunciad' fo That was his primary motive. Had it not been for that, the dunces might have railed against him till they were weary, without his troubling himself about them. He delighted to vex them, no doubt, but he had more delight in seeing how well he could vex them."

The "Odes to Obscurity and Oblivion," in ridicule of "cool Mason and warm Gray," being mentioned, Johnson said, "They are Colman's best things." Upon it being observed that it was believed these Odes were made by Colman and Lloyd jointly;—JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, how can two people make an Ode? Perhaps one made one of them, and one the other." I observed that two people had made a play, and quoted the anecdote of Beaumont and Fletcher, who were brought under suspicion of treason, because while concerting the plan of a tragedy when sitting together at a tavern, one of them was overheard saying to the other, "I'll kill the King." JOHNSON. "The first of these Odes is the best: but they are both good. They exposed a very bad kind of writing" BOSWELL. "Surely, Sir, Mr. Mason's 'Elfrida' is a fine poem: at least you will allow there are some good passages in it." JOHNSON. "There are now and then some good imitations of Milton's bad manner."

I often wondered at his low estimation of the writings of Gray and Mason. Of Gray's poetry I have, in a former part of this work, expressed my high opinion; and for that of Mr. Mason I have ever entertained a warm admiration. His "Elfrida" is exquisite, both in poetical description and moral sentiment, and his "Caractacus" is a noble drama. Nor can I omit paying my tribute of praise to some of his smaller poems which I have read with pleasure, and which no criticism shall persuade me not to like. If I wondered at Johnson's not tasting the works of Mason and Gray, still more have I wondered at their not tasting his works; that they should be insensible to his energy of diction, to his splendour of images, and comprehension of thought. Tastes may differ as to the violin, the flute, the hautboy, in short, all the lesser instruments: but who can be insensible to the powerful impressions of the majestick organ?

His "Taxation no Tyranny" being mentioned, he said, "I think I have not been attacked enough for it. Attack is the re-action. I never think I have hit hard, unless it rebounds" BOSWELL. "I don't know, Sir, what you would be at. Five or six shots of small

every newspaper, and repeated cannonading in pamphlets, think, satisfy you. But, Sir, you'll never make out this ; which we have talked, with a certain political lady,¹ since so severe against her principles." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, I have the better chance for that. She is like the Amazons of old ; she must be courted by the sword. But I have not been severe upon her." BOSWELL. "Yes, Sir, you have made her ridiculous." JOHNSON. "That was already done, Sir. To endeavour to make *her* ridiculous, is like blacking the chimney."

I put him in mind that the landlord at Ellon in Scotland said, that he heard he was the greatest man in England,—next to Lord Mansfield. "Aye, Sir, (said he,) the exception defined the idea. A Scotchman could go no farther :

'The force of Nature could no farther go.'"

Lady Miller's collection of verses by fashionable people, which were put into her Vase at Batheaston villa, near Bath, in competition for honorary prizes, being mentioned, he held them very cheap : "*Bouts rimés*, (said he,) is a mere conceit, and an *old* conceit *now*; I wonder how people were persuaded to write in that manner for this lady." I named a gentleman of his acquaintance, who wrote for the Vase JOHNSON. "He was a blockhead for his pains." BOSWELL. "The Duchess of Northumberland wrote."² JOHNSON. "Sir, the Duchess of Northumberland may do what she pleases : nobody will say any thing to a lady of her high rank. But I should be apt to throw *****'s verses in his face."³

I talked of the cheerfulness of Fleet-street, owing to the constant quick succession of people which we perceive passing through it. JOHNSON "Why, Sir, Fleet-street has a very animated appearance; but I think the full tide of human existence is at Charing-cross."

He made the common remark on the unhappiness which men who have led a busy life experience, when they retire in expectation of enjoying themselves at ease, and that they generally languish for want of their habitual occupation, and wish to return to it. He mentioned as strong an instance of this as can well be imagined.

¹ Mrs. Macaulay.

² On "a buttered muffin," according to Walpole Garrick seems to have been of Johnson's opinion, for he once slipped in three lines, when "Charity" had been given for a subject :

"THE VASE SPEAKS

"For Heaven's sake bestow on me,
A little wit, for that would be,
Indeed, an act of charity."

³ The Rev. Mr. Graves, according to Croker.

"An eminent tallow-chandler in London, who had acquired a considerable fortune, gave up the trade in favour of his foreman, and went to live at a country-house near town. He soon grew weary, and paid frequent visits to his old shop, where he desired they might let him know their *melting-days*, and he would come and assist them: which he accordingly did.¹ Here, Sir, was a man, to whom the most disgusting circumstance in the business to which he had been used, was a relief from idleness."

On Wednesday, April 5, I dined with him at Messieurs Dillys,² with Mr. John Scott of Amwell, the Quaker, Mr. Langton, Mr. Miller, (now Sir John,) and Dr. Thomas Campbell, an Irish clergyman, whom I took the liberty of inviting to Messieurs Dillys' table, having seen him at Mr. Thrale's, and been told that he had come to England chiefly with a view to see Dr. Johnson, for whom he entertained the highest veneration. He has since published "*A philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland*," a very entertaining book, which has, however, one fault,—that it assumes the fictitious character of an Englishman.

We talked of public speaking —JOHNSON. "We must not estimate a man's powers by his being able or not able to deliver his sentiments in publick. Isaac Hawkins Browne, one of the first wits of this country, got into parliament, and never opened his mouth." For my own part, I think it is more disgraceful never to try to speak, than to try it and fail, as it is more disgraceful not to fight, than to fight and be beaten." This argument appeared to me fallacious; for if a man has not spoken, it may be said that he would have done very well if he had tried; whereas, if he has tried

¹ This was Murphy's story originally, who always told it of *dripping-night*, instead of *melting-day*. — Mrs. Piozzi, *Marginalia*

² In a letter to Temple Boswell gives a little programme of their enjoyments, "To-day I dine at Sir John Pringle's; to-morrow at Dilly's, with Mr Johnson and Langton, &c., Thursday at Tom Davies's, with Mr Johnson and some others, Friday at the Turk's Head, Gerrard-street, with our club, Sir Joshua Reynolds, &c., who now dine once a month and sup every Friday. My forenoons are spent in visiting, and you know the distances in London makes that business enough." A few days later—after all this dissipation—he writes to his friend, "I have only to tell you, my divine, that I yesterday received the holy sacrament in St Paul's, and was

exalted in piety." He had prepared for this rite by a banquet with Wilkes on the Saturday evening

³ Johnson was strictly accurate.—Browne's name is not to be found in the list of Parliamentary speakers. "I had a friend," wrote Johnson to Mrs Piozzi, "of great eminence in the learned and the witty world, who had hung up some pots on his wall to furnish nests for sparrows. The poor sparrows, not knowing his character, were seduced by the convenience, and I never heard any man speak of any future enjoyment with such contortions of delight as he exhibited when he talked of eating the young ones." On the margin of her copy Mrs Piozzi writes that this was Hawkins Browne. Sidney Smith's grotesque description of his dancing at the court of Naples will be familiar to the reader.

and failed, there is nothing to be said for him. "Why then, (I asked,) is it thought disgraceful for a man not to fight, and not disgraceful not to speak in publick?" JOHNSON. "Because there may be other reasons for a man's not speaking in publick than want of resolution: he may have nothing to say, (laughing). Whereas, Sir, you know courage is reckoned the greatest of all virtues; because unless a man has that virtue, he has no security for preserving any other."

He observed, that "the statutes against bribery were intended to prevent upstarts with money from getting into parliament;" adding, that "if he were a gentleman of landed property, he would turn out all his tenants who did not vote for the candidate whom he supported" LANGTON. "Would not that, Sir, be checking the freedom of election?" JOHNSON. "Sir, the law does not mean that the privilege of voting should be independent of old family interest; of the permanent property of the country."¹

On Thursday, April 6, I dined with him at Mr. Thomas Davies's, with Mr. Hicky the painter, and my old acquaintance Mr. Moody the player.

Dr. Johnson, as usual, spoke contemptuously of Colley Cibber. "It is wonderful that a man, who for forty years had lived with the great and the witty, should have acquired so ill the talents of conversation: and he had but half to furnish, for one half of what he said was oaths" He, however, allowed considerable merit to some of his comedies, and said there was no reason to believe that "The

¹ Boswell's report is meagre, but Dr. Campbell jotted down some notes which show that the conversation was interesting and characteristic. This proves that Boswell was fitful in his task of reporter, and sometimes allowed as much to escape him as he secured.

"The Doctor when I came in had an answer, titled *Taxation and Tyranny*, to his last pamphlet in his hand. He laughed at it, and said he would read no more of it, for that it paid him compliments, but gave him no information. He asked if there were any more of them . . . Then Boswell (who understood his temper well) asked him somewhat, for I was not attending, relative to the provincial assemblies. The Doctor in process of discourse with him, argued with great vehemence that the assemblies were nothing more than our vestries. I asked him was there not this difference, that an act of the assemblies required the

King's assent to pass into a law his answer had more of wit than of argument. 'Well, Sir,' says he, 'that only gives it more weight.' I thought I had gone too far, but dinner was then announced, and Dilly, who paid all attention to him in placing him next the fire, said, 'Doctor, perhaps you will be too warm.' 'No, Sir,' says the Doctor, 'I am neither hot nor cold.' 'And yet,' said I, 'Doctor, you are not a lukewarm man.' This thought pleased him, and as I sat next him, I had a fine opportunity of attending to his phiz, and I could clearly see he was fond of having his quaint things laughed at, and they (without any force) gratified my propensity to affuse grinning. Mr. Dilly led him to give his opinion of men and things, of which he is very free. . . . Talking of the Scotch (after Boswell was gone) he said, though they were not a learned nation, yet they were very far removed from igno-

Careless Husband” was not written by himself. Davies said, he was the first dramattick writer who introduced genteel ladies upon the stage. Johnson refuted this observation by instancing several such characters in comedies before his time. DAVIES. (trying to defend himself from a charge of ignorance,) “I mean genteel moral characters.” “I think, (said Hicky,) gentility and morality are inseparable.” BOSWELL. “By no means, Sir. The genteelest characters are often the most immoral. Does not Lord Chesterfield give precepts for uniting wickedness and the graces? A man, indeed, is not genteel when he gets drunk; but most vices may be committed very genteely. a man may debauch his friend’s wife genteely: he may cheat at cards genteely.” HICKY. “I do not think *that* is genteel.” BOSWELL. “Sir, it may not be like a gentleman, but it may be genteel.” JOHNSON. “You are meaning two different things. One means exteriour grace, the other honour. It is certain, that a man may be very immoral with exteriour grace. Lovelace, in ‘Clarissa,’ is a very genteel and a very wicked character. Tom Hervey, who died t’other day, though a vicious man, was one of the genteelest men that ever lived.” Tom Davies instanced Charles the Second. JOHNSON (taking fire at any attack upon this Prince, for whom he had an extraordinary partiality,) “Charles the Second was licentious in his practice, but he always had a reverence for what was good. Charles the Second knew his people, and rewarded merit. The Church was at no time better filled than in his reign. He was the best King we have had from his time till the reign of his present Majesty, except James the Second, who was a very good King, but unhappily believed that it was necessary for the salvation of his subjects that they should be Roman Catholics. *He* had the merit of endeavouring to do

rance. Learning was new among them, and he doubted not but they would in time be a learned people, for they were a fine, bold, enterprising people. He compared England and Scotland to two lions, the one saturated with his belly full, and the other prowling for prey. But the test he offered to prove, that Scotland, though it had learning enough for common life, yet had not sufficient for the dignity of literature, was that he defied anyone to produce a classical book written in Scotland since Buchanan. Robertson, he said, used pretty words, but he liked Hume better, and neither of them would he allow to be more to Clarendon than a rat to a cat. Turning to me, he said, ‘You have produced

classical writers and scholars. I don’t know,’ he says, ‘that any man is before Usher as a scholar, unless it may be Selden, and you have a philosopher, Boyle, and you have Swift and Congreve, but the latter,’ he says, ‘denied you,’ and he might have added, the former too. He then added, ‘You certainly have a turn for the drama, for you have Southerne and Farquhar, and Congreve, and many living authors and players.’ Encouraged by this, I went back to assert the genius of England in old times, and ventured to say that the first professors of Oxford and Paris, &c., were Irish. ‘Sir,’ says he, ‘I believe there is something in what you say. I am content with it, *since they are not Scotch*.’”

what he thought was for the salvation of the souls of his subjects, till he lost a great empire. *We*, who thought that we should *not* be saved if we were Roman Catholics, had the merit of maintaining our religion, at the expence of submitting ourselves to the government of King William, (for it could not be done otherwise,) —to the government of one of the most worthless scoundrels that ever existed. No; Charles the Second was not such a man as ———, ¹ (naming another King) He did not destroy his father's will. He took money, indeed, from France but he did not betray those over whom he ruled. he did not let the French fleet pass ours. George the First knew nothing, and desired to know nothing; did nothing, and desired to do nothing: and the only good thing that is told of him is, that he wished to restore the crown to its hereditary successor." He roared with prodigious violence against George the Second. When he ceased, Moody interjected in an Irish tone, and with a comick look, "Ah! poor George the Second."

I mentioned that Dr Thomas Campbell had come from Ireland to London, principally to see Dr. Johnson. He seemed angry at this observation. DAVIES. "Why, you know, Sir, there came a man from Spain to see *Livy*;" and Corelli came to England to see Purcell, and, when he heard he was dead, went directly back again to Italy." JOHNSON. "I should not have wished to be dead to disappoint Campbell, had he been so foolish as you represent him; but I should have wished to have been a hundred miles off." This was apparently perverse; and I do believe it was not his real way of thinking. he could not but like a man who came so far to see him. He laughed with some complacency, when I told him Campbell's odd expression to me concerning him "That having seen such a man, was a thing to talk of a century hence,"—as if he could live so long."

* Plin Epist Lib ii Ep. 3.

¹ Roswell's ludicrous caution is shown in thus suppressing the name of George II, as Mr Croker supposes, and which is unmeaning considering the "prodigious violence" with which he is spoken of

² "A flashy friend," described in the most amusing fashion by Mrs Thrale, has been mistaken both by Mr Hayward and Mr Croker for this Dr Campbell. Mrs. Thrale's friend was always protesting his worship of Johnson,

vowing that "*he would clean shoes for him*," and shed his blood for him. An acute critic in the *Quarterly Review* has shown that the allusion is to a Mr Musgrave. It is true Mr Croker had some doubts, but it is astonishing how Mrs. Thrale's description could have been supposed to apply to Campbell, as, at the close of her lively sketch, she quotes a phrase of the latter's "'*Upon my honour, Sir,*' "and *indeed now*," as Dr. Campbell's phrase is, 'I am but a twitler to him.'"

We got into an argument whether the Judges who went to India might with propriety engage in trade. Johnson warmly maintained that they might. "For why (he urged) should not Judges get riches, as well as those who deserve them less." I said, they should have sufficient salaries, and have nothing to take off their attention from the affairs of the publick. JOHNSON. "No Judge, Sir, can give his whole attention to his office, and it is very proper that he should employ what time he has to himself, for his own advantage, in the most profitable manner." "Then, Sir, (said Davies, who enlivened the dispute by making it somewhat dramatick,) he may become an insurer, and when he is going to the bench, he may be stopped,—'Your Lordship cannot go yet: here is a bunch of invoices' several ships are about to sail." JOHNSON. "Sir, you may as well say a judge should not have a house; for they may come and tell him, 'Your Lordship's house is on fire,' and so, instead of minding the business of his Court, he is to be occupied in getting the engine with the greatest speed. There is no end of this. Every Judge who has land, trades to a certain extent in corn or in cattle, and in the land itself, undoubtedly. His steward acts for him, and so do clerks for a great merchant. A Judge may be a farmer, but he is not to geld his own pigs. A Judge may play a little at cards for his amusement, but he is not to play at marbles, or at chuck-farthing in the Piazza. No, Sir; there is no profession to which a man gives a very great proportion of his time. It is wonderful when a calculation is made, how little the mind is actually employed in the discharge of any profession. No man would be a Judge, upon the condition of being obliged to be totally a Judge. The best employed lawyer has his mind at work but for a small proportion of his time a great deal of his occupation is merely mechanical.—I once wrote for a magazine I made a calculation, that if I should write but a page a day, at the same rate, I should, in ten years, write nine volumes in folio, of an ordinary size and print." BOSWELL. "Such as Carte's History?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir. When a man writes from his own mind, he writes very rapidly.* The greatest part of a writer's time is spent in reading, in order to write a man will turn over half a library to make one book."

I argued warmly against the Judges trading, and mentioned Hale as an instance of a perfect Judge, who devoted himself

* Johnson certainly did, who had a mind stored with knowledge, and teeming with imagery, but the observation is not applicable to writers in general.

entirely to his office. JOHNSON. "Hale, Sir, attended to other things beside law: he left a great estate." BOSWELL. "That was, because what he got, accumulated without any exertion and anxiety on his part."

While the dispute went on, Moody once tried to say something upon our side. Tom Davies clapped him on the back, to encourage him. Beauclerk, to whom I mentioned this circumstance, said, that "he could not conceive a more humiliating situation than to be clapped on the back by Tom Davies"¹

We spoke of Rolt, to whose Dictionary of Commerce, Dr. Johnson wrote the Preface. JOHNSON "Old Gardner the bookseller employed Rolt and Smart to write a monthly miscellany, called 'The Visitor.' There was a formal written contract, which Allen the printer saw. Gardner thought as you do of the Judge. They were bound to write nothing else. They were to have, I think, a third of the profits of this sixpenny pamphlet, and the contract was for ninety-nine years I wish I had thought of giving this to Thurlow, in the cause about Literary Property. What an excellent instance would it have been of the oppression of booksellers towards poor authors!" (smiling)² Davies, zealous for the honour of *the Trade*, said, Gardner was not properly a bookseller. JOHNSON "Nay, Sir; he certainly was a bookseller. He had served his time regularly, was a member of the Stationers' company, kept a shop in the face of mankind, purchased copy-right, and was a *bibliopole*, Sir, in every sense. I wrote for some months in 'The Visitor,' for poor Smart, while he was mad, not then knowing the terms on which he was engaged to write, and thinking I was doing him good. I hoped his wits would soon return to him. Mine returned to me, and I wrote in 'The Visitor' no longer."

Friday, April 7, I dined with him at a tavern,³ with a numerous

Second Edition, line 17—There has probably been some mistake as to the terms of this supposed extraordinary contract, the recital of which from hear-say afforded Johnson so much play for his sportive acuteness. Or if it was worded as he supposed, it is so strange that I should conclude it was a joke. Mr Gardner, I am assured, was a worthy and liberal man.

¹ This remark of Beauclerk's almost warrants a marginal note in Wilkes' copy of Boswell's "Johnson," viz, that he was "shy, shy, and dry"

² A Captain Northall, who had travelled in Italy, had made some notes in a pocket-book of the various pictures, statues, &c., which he had seen. It fell into Rolt's hands, who, from such slender materials and some volumes of old travels,

shaped the following—"Travels through Italy containing new and curious observations on that country, with the most authentic account yet published of capital pieces of painting, sculpture, and architecture that are to be seen in Italy. By John Northall, Esq. 1766"

³ A meeting of the club, as Mr Croker shows. He supposes that Boswell was afraid of giving offence to the members

company. JOHNSON. "I have been reading 'Twiss's Travels in Spain,' which are just come out. They are as good as the first book of travels that you will take up. They are as good as those of Keyser or Blainville, nay, as Addison's, if you except the learning. They are not so good as Brydson's, but they are better than Poccocke's. I have not, indeed, cut the leaves yet, but I have read in them where the pages are open, and I do not suppose that what is in the pages which are closed is worse than what is in the open pages.—It would seem (he added,) that Addison had not acquired much Italian learning, for we do not find it introduced into his writings. The only instance that I recollect, is his quoting '*Stavo bene. Per star meglio, sto qui.*'"

I mentioned Addison's having borrowed many of his classical remarks from Leandro Alberti. Mr Beauclerk said, "It was alleged that he had borrowed also from another Italian authour." JOHNSON. "Why Sir, all who go to look for what the Classics have said of Italy must find the same passages, and I should think it would be one of the first things the Italians would do on the revival of learning, to collect all that the Roman authours had said of their country."

Ossian being mentioned,—JOHNSON. "Supposing the Irish and Erse languages to be the same, which I do not believe, yet as there is no reason to suppose that the inhabitants of the Highlands and Hebrides ever wrote their native language, it is not to be credited that a long poem was preserved among them. If we had no evidence of the art of writing being practised in one of the counties of England, we should not believe that a long poem was preserved *there*, though in the neighbouring counties, where the same language was spoken, the inhabitants could write." BEAUCLEERK. "The ballad of Lullaballero was once in the mouths of all the people of this country, and is said to have had a great effect in bringing about the Revolution. Yet I question whether any body can repeat it now, which shews how improbable it is that much poetry should be preserved by tradition."

One of the company suggested an internal objection to the antiquity of the poetry said to be Ossian's, that we do not find the wolf in it, which must have been the case had it been of that age

by his reports of their conversations. But, in truth, Boswell records a good deal of what occurred in the club room. I believe the true cause to have been his fear of Burke, from whom he had

hopes, for on other occasions, when that statesman was present, he suppresses his name, and that of the place of meeting.

The mention of the wolf had led Johnson to think of other wild beasts, and while Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Langton were carrying on a dialogue about something which engaged them earnestly, he, in the midst of it, broke out, "Pennant tells of Bears—" [what he added, I have forgotten] They went on, which he being dull of hearing, did not perceive, or, if he did, was not willing to break off his talk, so he continued to vociferate his remarks, and *Bear* ("like a word in a catch," as Beauclerk said,) was repeatedly heard at intervals, which coming from him who, by those who did not know him, had been so often assimilated to that ferocious animal, while we who were sitting around could hardly stifle laughter, produced a very ludicrous effect. Silence having ensued, he proceeded "We are told, that the black bear is innocent, but I should not like to trust myself with him." Mr. Gibbon muttered, in a low tone of voice, "I should not like to trust myself with *you*." This piece of sarcastick pleasantry was a prudent resolution, if applied to a competition of abilities.

Patriotism having become one of our topicks, Johnson suddenly uttered, in a strong determined tone, an apothegm, at which many will start "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." But let it be considered, that he did not mean a real and generous love of our country, but that pretended patriotism which so many, in all ages and countries, have made a cloak for self-interest. I maintained, that certainly all patriots were not scoundrels. Being urged (not by Johnson,) to name one exception, I mentioned an eminent person, whom we all greatly admired. JOHNSON "Sir, I do not say that he is *not* honest, but we have no reason to conclude from his political conduct that he *is* honest. Were he to accept of a place from this ministry, he would lose that character of firmness which he has, and might be turned out of his place in a year. This ministry is neither stable, nor grateful to their friends, as Sir Robert Walpole was so that he may think it more for his interest to take his chance of his party coming in."

Mrs Pritchard being mentioned, he said, "Her playing was quite mechanical. It is wonderful how little mind she had. Sir, she had never read the tragedy of Macbeth all through¹ She no more thought of the play out of which her part was taken, than

¹ Mrs Thrale adds (*Marginalia*) that the actress gave Johnson her reason for this neglect—"she had not time to do so." Mr Forster suggests as the proba-

ble cause of Dr Johnson's depreciation of this lady, that he associated her with the disagreeable recollection of the failure of his play.

a shoemaker thinks of the skin, out of which the piece of leather, of which he is making a pair of shoes, is cut."

On Saturday, May 8, I dined with him at Mr. Thrale's, where we met the Irish Dr. Campbell. Johnson had supped the night before at Mrs Abington's, with some fashionable people whom he named, and he seemed much pleased with having made one in so elegant a circle.¹

Mrs. Thrale, who frequently practised a coarse mode of flattery, by repeating his *bon mots* in his hearing, told us that he had said, a certain celebrated actor was just fit to stand at the door of an auction-room, with a long pole, and cry, "Pray, gentlemen, walk in;" and that a certain authour, upon hearing this, had said, that another still more celebrated actor was fit for nothing better than that, and would pick your pocket after you came out. JOHNSON. "Nay, my dear lady, there is no wit in what our friend added; there is only abuse. You may as well say of any man that he will pick a pocket. Besides, the man who is stationed at the door does not pick people's pockets: that is done within, by the auctioneer."

Mrs Thrale told us, that Tom Davies repeated, in a very bald manner, the story of Dr. Johnson's first repartee to me, which I have related exactly. He made me say, "I *was born* in Scotland," instead of "I *come from* Scotland;" so that Johnson's saying, "That, Sir, is what a great many of your countrymen cannot help," had no point, or even meaning. and that upon this being mentioned to Mr. Fitzherbert, he observed, "It is not every man that can *carry a bon mot*."²

¹ Vol I, page 241

Cor et Ad—Line 3 For "May" read "April"

Ibid—Line 7 After "circle" read, "Nor did he omit to pique his mistress a little with jealousy of her housewifery, for he said, (with a smile,) 'Mrs. Abington's jelly, my dear lady, was better than yours'"

² "Mrs Abington," says Baretti in his *Marginalia*, "invited Johnson to dinner, and took pains to distinguish him above all her guests, who were all people of the first distinction." No wonder that the sage was gratified

³ Boswell's report of this evening is again meagre, and it would almost seem that at these large dinners he grew too convivial to carry out his duties. Dr Campbell's diary supplies some characteristic details. "Dined with Thrale, where Dr Johnson was, and Boswell (and Baretti as usual). The Doctor was not in as good spurs as he was at

Dilly's. He had supped the night before with Lady —, Miss Jeffreys, one of the maids of honour, Sir J Reynolds, &c, at Mrs Abington's. He said Sir C Thompson, and others who were there, spoke like people who had seen good company, and so did Mrs Abington herself, who could not have seen good company. When Dr Goldsmith was mentioned, and Dr Percy's intention of writing his life, he expressed his approbation strongly, adding that Goldsmith was the best writer he ever knew upon every subject he wrote upon. He said that Kenrick had borrowed all his

On Monday, April 10, I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, with Mr. Langton and the Irish Dr. Campbell, whom the General had obligingly given me leave to bring with me. This learned gentleman was thus gratified with a very high intellectual feast, by not only being in company with Dr. Johnson, but with General Oglethorpe, who had been so long a celebrated name both at home and abroad.*

I must, again and again, intreat of my readers not to suppose that my imperfect record of conversation contains the whole of what was said by Johnson, or other eminent persons who lived with him. What I have preserved, however, has the value of the most perfect authenticity.

He this day enlarged upon Pope's melancholy remark,

"Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest."

He asserted, that *the present* was never a happy state to any human being, but that, as every part of life, of which we are conscious, was at some point of time a period yet to come, in which felicity

* Let me here be allowed to pay my tribute of most sincere gratitude to the memory of that excellent person, my intimacy with whom was the more valuable to me, because my first acquaintance with him was unexpected and unsolicited. Soon after the publication of my "Account of Corsica," he did me the honour to call on me, and approaching me with a frank courteous air, said, "My name, Sir, is Oglethorpe, and I wish to be acquainted with you." I was not a little flattered to be thus addressed by an eminent man, of whom I had read in Pope, from my early years,

"Or, driven by strong benevolence of soul,
Will fly, like OGLETHORPE, from pole to pole"

I was fortunate enough to be found worthy of his good opinion, insomuch, that I not only was invited to make one in the many respectable companies whom he entertained at his table, but had a cover at his hospitable board every day when I happened to be disengaged, and in his society I never failed to enjoy learned and animated conversation, seasoned with genuine sentiments of virtue and religion

dictionary from him 'Why,' says Boswell, 'every man who writes a dictionary must borrow' 'Not he,' says Johnson, 'that is not necessary' 'Why,' says Boswell, 'have you not a great deal in common with those who wrote before you?' 'Yes, Sir,' says Johnson, 'I have the words, but my business was not to make words, but to explain them' Talking of Garrick and Barry, he said he always abused Garrick himself, but when any body else did so he fought for the dog like a tiger as to Barry, he supposed he could not read 'And how does he get his part?' says one 'Why somebody reads it to him, and yet I know,' says he, 'that he is very much admired' Mrs Thrale then

took him by repeating a repartee of Murphy's" (this was the speech about the "long pole") "Johnson said that Murphy spoke nonsense, for that people's pockets were not picked at the door, but in the room 'Then,' said I, 'he was worse than the pick-pocket, forasmuch as he was a pandar to them' This went off with a laugh" Mr Croker, who was often very happy in his guesses, rightly supposed the "still more celebrated actor" to be Garrick, and the "certain author" Murphy, both of whose names Campbell supplies He was wrong, however, in his guess at the "certain celebrated actor," which was Barry, not Sheridan, as he fancied

was expected, there was some happiness produced by hope. Being pressed upon this subject, and asked if he really was of opinion that though, in general, happiness was very rare in human life, a man was not sometimes happy in the moment that was present, he answered, "Never, but when he is drunk."

He urged General Oglethorpe to give the world his Life.¹ He said, "I know no man whose Life would be more interesting. If I were furnished with materials, I should be very glad to write it."²

Mr Scott of Amwell's Elegies were lying in the room. Dr. Johnson observed, "They are very well, but such as twenty people might write." Upon this I took occasion to controvert Horace's maxim,

"————— *mediocribus esse poetis*

Non Di, non homines, non concessere columnæ"

for here (I observed,) was a very middle-rate poet, who pleased

* The General seemed unwilling to enter upon it at this time, but upon a subsequent occasion he communicated to me a number of particulars, which I have committed to writing, but I was not sufficiently diligent in obtaining more from him, not apprehending that his friends were so soon to lose him, for notwithstanding his great age, he was very healthy and vigorous, and was at last carried off by a violent fever, which is often fatal at any period of life

¹ "The old man," says Dr Campbell, "excused himself, saying the life of a private man was not worthy public notice. Boswell told him to furnish the skeleton, and Dr Johnson would find the bones and muscles. 'He would be a good doctor,' says the general, 'who would do that.' 'Well,' says I, 'he is a good Doctor,' at which he, the Doctor, laughed very heartily. Talked of America, and that his works would not be admired there. 'No,' says Boswell, 'we shall soon hear of his being hung in effigy.' 'I should be glad of that,' says the Doctor, 'that would be a new source of fame, alluding to some conversation on the fulness of his fame, which had gone before. 'And,' says Boswell, 'I wonder he has not been hung in effigy from the Hebrides to England.' 'I shall suffer them to do it corporally,' says the Doctor, 'if they can find a tree to do it upon.' Boswell asked if he had ever been under the hands of a dancing-master. 'Aye, and a dancing-mistress too, but I own to you I never took a lesson, but one or two. My blind eyes showed me I never could make a proficiency.' Boswell led him

to give his opinion of Gray he said there were but two good stanzas in all his works. Boswell, desirous of eliciting his opinion on too many subjects, as he thought, he rose up and took his hat. This was not noticed by any body, as it was nine o'clock, but after we got into Mr Langton's coach, who gave us a set down, he said, 'Boswell's conversation consists entirely in asking questions, and it is extremely offensive.' We defended it upon Boswell's eagerness to hear the Doctor speak."

"Boswell took up the defence of suicide for argument's sake, and the Doctor said that some cases were more excusable than others, but if it were excusable it should be the last resource. 'For instance,' he says, 'if a man is distressed in circumstances (as in the case I mentioned of Denny) he ought to fly the country.' 'How can he fly,' says Boswell, 'if he has wife and children?' 'What, Sir,' says the Doctor, shaking his head as if to promote the fermentation of his wit, 'doth not a man fly from his wife and children if he murders himself?'"

many readers, and therefore poetry of a middle sort was entitled to some esteem; nor could I see why poetry should not, like every thing else, have different gradations of excellence, and, consequently of value. Johnson repeated the common remark, that "as there is no necessity for our having poetry at all, it being merely a luxury, an instrument of pleasure, it can have no value, unless when exquisite in its kind." I declared myself not satisfied. "Why then, Sir, (said he,) Horace and you must settle it." He was not much in the humour of talking.

No more of his conversation for some days appears in my journal, except that when a gentleman told him he had bought a suit of laces for his lady. He said, "Well, Sir, you have done a good thing, and a wise thing." "I have done a good thing, (said the gentleman,) but I do not know that I have done a wise thing." JOHNSON "Yes, Sir, no money is better spent than what is laid out for domestick satisfaction. A man is pleased that his wife is drest as well as other people; and a wife is pleased that she is drest."

On Friday, April 14, being Good-Friday, I repaired to him in the morning, according to my usual custom on this day, and breakfasted with him. I observed that he fasted so very strictly, that he did not even taste bread, and took no milk with his tea, I suppose because it is a kind of animal food.

He entered upon the state of the nation, and thus discoursed: "Sir, the great misfortune now is, that government has too little power. All that it has to bestow, must of necessity be given to support itself; so that it cannot reward merit. No man, for instance, can now be made a Bishop for his learning and piety,* his only chance for promotion is his being connected with somebody who has parliamentary interest. Our several ministries in this reign have outbid each other in concessions to the people. Lord Bute, though a very honourable man,—a man who meant well,—a man who had his blood full of prerogative,—was a theoretical statesman,—a book-minister,—and thought this country could be governed by the influence of the Crown alone. Then, Sir, he gave up a great deal. He advised the King to agree that the Judges should hold their places for life, instead of losing them at the accession of a new King. Lord Bute, I suppose, thought to make the King popular by this concession; but the people never minded it, and it was a most impolitick measure. There is no reason why a Judge

* From this too just observation there are some eminent exceptions.

should hold his office for life, more than any other person in publick trust. A Judge may be partial otherwise than to the Crown: we have seen Judges partial to the populace. A Judge may become corrupt, and yet there may not be legal evidence against him. A Judge may become froward from age. A Judge may grow unfit for his office in many ways. It was desirable that there should be a possibility of being delivered from him by a new King. That is now gone by an act of parliament *ex gratia* of the Crown. Lord Bute advised the King to give up a very large sum of money,* for which nobody thanked him. It was of consequence to the King, but nothing to the publick, among whom it was divided. When I say Lord Bute advised, I mean, that such acts were done when he was minister, and we are to suppose that he advised them — Lord Bute shewed an undue partiality to Scotchmen. He turned out Dr. Nichols, a very eminent man, from being physician to the King, to make room for one of his countrymen, a man very low in his profession. He had ***** and **** to go on errands for him.¹ He had occasion for people to go on errands for him, but he should not have had Scotchmen, and, certainly, he should not have suffered them to have access to him before the first people in England."

I told him, that the admission of one of them before the first people in England, which had given the greatest offence, was no more than what happens at every minister's levee, where those who attend are admitted in the order that they have come, which is better than admitting them according to their rank, for if that were to be the rule, a man who has waited all the morning might have the mortification to see a peer, newly come, go in before him, and keep him waiting still. JOHNSON "True, Sir, but **** should not have come to the levee, to be in the way of people of consequence. He saw Lord Bute at all times, and could have said what he had

* The money arising from the property of the prizes taken before the declaration of war which were given to his Majesty by the peace of Paris, and amounted to upwards of 700,000*l* and from the lands in the ceded islands, which were estimated at 200,000*l* more. Surely, there was a noble munificence in this gift from a Monarch to his people. And let it be remembered, that during the Earl of Bute's administration, the King was graciously pleased to give up the hereditary revenues of the Crown, and to accept, instead of them, of the limited sum of 800,000*l* a year, upon which Blackstone observes, that "The hereditary revenues, being put under the same management as the other branches of the publick patrimony, will produce more, and be better collected than heretofore, and the publick is a gainer of upwards of 100,000*l* per annum, by this disinterested bounty of his Majesty" Book I Chap 8 p 330

¹ It is easy to fill up these blanks, Bowen always giving his readers a clue by scrupulously setting down the

proper number of stars. Wedderburne and Home are alluded to

to say at any time, as well as at the levee. There is now no Prime Minister: there is only an agent for government in the House of Commons. We are governed by the Cabinet, but there is no one head there, as in Sir Robert Walpole's time." BOSWELL. "What then, Sir, is the use of Parliament?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, Parliament is a larger council to the King, and the advantage of such a council is, having a great number of men of property concerned in the legislature, who, for their own interest, will not consent to bad laws. And you must have observed, Sir, that administration is feeble and timid, and cannot act with that authority and resolution which is necessary. Were I in power, I would turn out every man who dared to oppose me. Government has the distribution of offices, that it may be enabled to maintain its authority."

"Lord Bute (he added,) took down too fast, without building up something new." BOSWELL. "Because, Sir, he found a rotten building. The political coach was drawn by a set of bad horses. it was necessary to change them." JOHNSON. "But he should have changed them one by one."

I told him that I had been informed by Mr. Orme, that many parts of the East Indies were better mapped than the Highlands of Scotland. JOHNSON. "That a country may be mapped, it must be travelled over." "Nay, (said I, meaning to laugh with him at one of his prejudices,) can't you say, it is not *worth* mapping?"

As we walked to St. Clement's church, and saw several shops open upon this most solemn fast-day of the Christian world, I remarked, that one disadvantage arising from the immensity of London, was, that nobody was heeded by his neighbour, there was no fear of censure for not observing Good-Friday, as it ought to be kept, and as it is kept in country towns. He said, it was, upon the whole, very well observed even in London. He, however, owned that London was too large, but added, "It is nonsense to say the head is too big for the body. It would be as much too big, though the body were ever so large. that is to say, though the country were ever so extensive. It has no similarity to a head connected with a body."

Dr. Wetherell, Master of University College, Oxford, accompanied us home from church, and after he was gone, there came two other gentlemen, one of whom uttered the common-place complaints, that by the increase of taxes, labour would be dear, other nations would undersell us, and our commerce would be ruined. JOHNSON, (smiling). "Never fear, Sir. Our commerce is in a very good state, and suppose we had no commerce at all, we could live very well on the produce of our own country." I cannot omit to

mention, that I never knew any man who was less disposed to be querulous than Johnson. Whether the subject was his own situation, or the state of the publick, or the state of human nature in general, though he saw the evils, his mind was turned to resolution, and never to whining or complaint.

We went again to St Clement's in the afternoon. He had found fault with the preacher in the morning for not choosing a text adapted to the day. The preacher in the afternoon had chosen one extremely proper: "It is finished."

After the evening service, he said, "Come, you shall go home with me, and sit just an hour." But he was better than his word, for after we had drunk tea with Mrs. Williams, he asked me to go up to his study with him, where we sat a long while together in a serene undisturbed frame of mind, sometimes in silence, and sometimes conversing, as we felt ourselves inclined, or more properly speaking, as *he* was inclined, for during all the course of my long intimacy with him, my respectful attention never abated, and my wish to hear him was such, that I constantly watched every dawning of communication from that great and illuminated mind.

He observed, "All knowledge is of itself of some value. There is nothing so minute or inconsiderable, that I would not rather know it than not. In the same manner, all power, of whatever sort, is of itself desirable. A man would not submit to learn to hem a ruffle, of his wife, or his wife's maid, but if a mere wish could attain it, he would rather wish to be able to hem a ruffle."

He again advised me to keep a journal fully and minutely, but not to mention such trifles as, that meat was too much or too little done, or that the weather was fair or rainy. He had, till very near his death, a contempt for the notion that the weather affects the human frame.

I told him that our friend Goldsmith had said to me, that he had come too late into the world, for that Pope and other poets had taken up the places in the Temple of Fame, so that as but a few at any period can possess poetical reputation, a man of genius can now hardly acquire it. JOHNSON "That is one of the most sensible things I have ever heard of Goldsmith. It is difficult to get literary fame, and it is every day growing more difficult. Ah, Sir, that should make a man think of securing happiness in another world, which all who try sincerely for it may attain. In comparison of that, how little are all other things! The belief of immortality is impressed upon all men, and all men act under an impression of it, however they may talk, and though, perhaps, they may be scarcely sensible of it." I said it appeared to me that some people had not

the least notion of immortality; and I mentioned a distinguished gentleman of our acquaintance. JOHNSON. "Sir, if it were not for the notion of immortality, he would cut a throat to fill his pockets." When I quoted this to Beauclerk, who knew much more of the gentleman than we did, he said, in his acid manner, "He would cut a throat to fill his pockets, if it were not for fear of being hanged."

Dr. Johnson proceeded: "Sir, there is a great cry about infidelity; but there are, in reality, very few infidels. I have heard a person, originally a Quaker, but now, I am afraid, a Deist, say, that he did not believe there were, in all England, above two hundred infidels."

He was pleased to say, "If you come to settle here, we will have one day in the week on which we will meet by ourselves. That is the happiest conversation where there is no competition, no vanity, but a calm quiet interchange of sentiments." In his private register this evening is thus marked, "Boswell sat with me till night, we had some serious talk."^a It also appears from the same record, that after I left him he was occupied in religious duties, in "giving Francis, his servant, some directions for preparation to communicate; in reviewing his life, and resolving on better conduct." The humility and piety which he discovers on such occasions, is truly edifying. No saint, however, in the course of his religious warfare, was more sensible of the unhappy failure of pious resolves, than Johnson. He said one day, talking to an acquaintance on the subject, "Sir, Hell is paved with good intentions."

On Sunday, April 16, being Easter-day, after having attended the solemn service at St Paul's, I dined with Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Williams. I maintained that Horace was wrong in placing happiness in *Nel admirari*, for that I thought admiration one of the most agreeable of all our feelings, and I regretted that I had lost much of my disposition to admire, which people generally do as they advance in life. JOHNSON. "Sir, as a man advances in life, he gets what is better than admiration,—judgement, to estimate things at their true value." I still insisted that admiration was more pleasing than judgement, as love is more pleasing than friendship. The feeling of friendship is like that of being comfortably filled with roast-beef, love, like being enlivened with champagne. JOHNSON. "No, Sir, admiration and love are like being intoxicated with champagne, judgement and friendship like being enlivened. Waller has hit upon the same thought with you.^b but I don't believe

^a Prayers and Meditations, p. 138

^b "Amoret's as sweet and good
As the most delicious food,
Which but tasted does impart
Life and gladness to the heart."

"Suchness's beauty's wine,
Which to madness does incline,
Such a liquor as no brain
That is mortal can sustain."

you have borrowed from Waller. I wish you would enable yourself to borrow more."

He then took occasion to enlarge on the advantages of reading, and combated the idle superficial notion, that knowledge enough may be acquired in conversation. "The foundation (said he,) must be laid by reading. General principles must be had from books, which, however, must be brought to the test of real life. In conversation you never get a system. What is said upon a subject is to be gathered from a hundred people. The parts of a truth, which a man gets thus, are at such a distance from each other, that he never attains to a full view."

On Tuesday, April 18, he and I were engaged to go with Sir Joshua Reynolds to dine with Mr. Cambridge, at his beautiful villa on the banks of the Thames, near Twickenham.¹ Dr Johnson's tardiness was such, that Sir Joshua, who had an appointment at

Cor et Ad—After line 2 read,—

"TO BENNET LANGTON ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,—I have enquired more minutely about the medicine for the rheumatism, which I am sorry to hear that you still want. The receipt is this

"Take equal quantities of flour of sulphur, and flour of mustard-seed, make them an electuary with honey or treacle, and take a bolus as big as a nutmeg several times a day, as you can bear it. drinking after it a quarter of a pint of the infusion of the root of Lovage

"Lovage, in Ray's 'Nomenclature,' is *Levisbium* perhaps the Botanists may know the Latin name

"Of this medicine I pretend not to judge. There is all the appearance of its efficacy, which a single instance can afford. The patient was very old, the pain very violent, and the relief, I think, speedy and lasting

"My opinion of alterative medicine is not high, but *quid tentasse noceat*? if it does harm or does no good, it may be omitted, but that it may do good, you have, I hope, reason to think is desired by, Sir, your most affectionate

"Humble servant,

"April 17, 1775"

"SAM. JOHNSON

¹ Boswell was now living in a whirl of pleasure. "I am indeed enjoying this metropolis to the full, according to my taste, except that I cannot, I see, have a plenary indulgence from you for Asiatic multiplicity. Be not afraid of me, except when I take too much claret, and then indeed there is a *furor brevis* as dangerous as anger. I intended to have set out for Wilton to-morrow, but I am invited to a dinner on the banks of the Thames, at Richard Owen Cambridge's where are to be Reynolds, Johnson and Hermes Harris.—'Do you think so?' said he 'Most certainly,' said I. Do you remember how I used to laugh at his style when we were in the Temple?"

"I have rather had too much dissipation since I came last to town. I try to keep a journal, and shall show you that I have done tolerably, but it is hardly credible what ground I go over, and what a variety of men and manners, I contemplate in a day, and all the time I myself am *pass magni*, for my exuberant spirits will not let me listen enough. I am just going to the Lord Mayor's grand dinner on Easter Monday, so must conclude. I have only to tell you, as my divine, that I yesterday received the holy sacrament in St. Paul's church and was exalted in piety."

—Boswell's Letters, 186

Richmond early in the day, was obliged to go by himself on horse-back, leaving his coach to Johnson and me. Johnson was in such good spirits, that every thing seemed to please him as we drove along.

Our conversation turned on a variety of subjects. He thought portrait-painting an improper employment for a woman. "Public practice of any art, (he observed,) and staring in men's faces, is very indelicate in a female." I happened to start a question of propriety, whether when a man knows that some of his intimate friends are invited to the house of another friend, with whom they are all equally intimate, he may join them without an invitation. JOHNSON. "No, Sir, he is not to go when he is not invited. They may be invited on purpose to abuse him," (smiling)

As a curious instance how little a man knows, or wishes to know, his own character in the world, or, rather, as a convincing proof that Johnson's roughness was only external, and did not proceed from his heart, I insert the following dialogue. JOHNSON. "It is wonderful, Sir, how rare a quality good humour is in life. We meet with very few good humoured men." I mentioned four of our friends, none of whom he would allow to be good humoured. One was *acid*, another was *muddy*, and to the others he had objections which have escaped me. Then, shaking his head and stretching himself at his ease in the coach, and smiling with much complacency, he turned to me and said, "I look upon *myself* as a good humoured fellow." The epithet *fellow*, applied to the great Lexicographer, the stately Moralist, the masterly Critick, as if he had been *Sam* Johnson, a mere pleasant companion, was highly diverting, and this light notion of himself struck me with wonder. I answered, also smiling, "No, no, Sir, that will *not* do. You are good natured, but not good humoured. you are irascible. You have not patience with folly and absurdity. I believe you would pardon them, if there were time to deprecate your vengeance; but punishment follows so quick after sentence, that they cannot escape."

I had brought with me a great bundle of Scotch magazines and newspapers, in which his "Journey to the Western Islands" was attacked in every mode, and I read a great part of them to him, knowing they would afford him entertainment. I wish the writers of them had been present: they would have been sufficiently vexed. One ludicrous imitation of his style, by Mr Maclaurin, now one of the Scotch Judges, with the title of Lord Dreghorn, was distinguished by him from the rude mass. "This (said he,) is the best. But I could caricature my own style much better myself."

He defended his remark upon the general insufficiency of education in Scotland; and confirmed to me the authenticity of his witty saying on the learning of the Scotch,—“ Their learning is like bread in a besieged town every man gets a little, but no man gets a full meal ’ ” There is (said he,) in Scotland a diffusion of learning, a certain portion of it widely and thinly spread A merchant there has as much learning as one of their clergy.”

He talked of Isaac Walton’s *Lives*, which was one of his most favourite books Dr. Donne’s *Life*, he said, was the most perfect of them. He observed, that “ it was wonderful that Walton, who was in a very low situation in life, should have been familiarly received by so many great men, and that at a time when the ranks of society were kept more separate than they are now ” He supposed that Walton had then given up his business as a linen-draper and sempster, and was only an authour, and added, “ that he was a great panegyrist ” BOSWELL “ No quality will get a man more friends than a disposition to admire the qualities of others I do not mean flattery, but a sincere admiration ” JOHNSON “ Nay, Sir, flattery pleases very generally In the first place, the flatterer may think what he says to be true, but, in the second place, whether he thinks so or not, he certainly thinks those whom he flatters of consequence enough to be flattered ’ ”

No sooner had we made our bow to Mr Cambridge, in his library, than Johnson ran eagerly to one side of the room, intent on poring over the backs of the books Sir Joshua observed, (*aside*,) “ He runs to the books, as I do to the pictures but I have the advantage I can see much more of the pictures than he can of the books.” Mr. Cambridge, upon this, politely said, “ Dr Johnson, I am going, with your pardon, to accuse myself, for I have the same custom which I perceive you have *But it seems odd that one should have such a desire to look at the backs of books* ” Johnson, ever ready for contest, instantly started from his reverie, wheeled about, and answered, “ Sir, the reason is very plain Knowledge is of two kinds We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it. When we inquire into any subject, the first thing we have to do is to know what books have treated of it. This leads us to look at catalogues, and at the backs of books in libraries ” Sir Joshua observed to me, the extraordinary promptitude with which Johnson flew upon an argument. “ Yes, (said I,) he has no formal preparation, no flourishing with his sword, he is through your body in an instant.”

Johnson was here solaced with an elegant entertainment, a very accomplished family, and much good company; among whom was

Mr Harris of Salisbury, who paid him many compliments on his "Journey to the Western Islands."¹

The common remark as to the utility of reading history being made,—JOHNSON. "We must consider how very little history there is, I mean real authentick history. That certain Kings reigned, and certain battles were fought, we can depend upon as true, but all the colouring, all the philosophy, of history is conjecture." BOSWELL. "Then, Sir, you would reduce all history to no better than an almanack," a mere chronological series of remarkable events " Mr Gibbon, who must at that time have been employed upon his history, of which he published the first volume in the following year, was present, but did not step forth in defence of that species of writing. He probably did not like to *trust* himself with Johnson "

Johnson observed, that the force of our early habits was so great, that though reason approved, nay, though our senses relished a different course, almost every man returned to them. I do not believe there is any observation upon human nature better founded than this, and, in many cases, it is a very painful truth, for where early habits have been mean and wretched, the joy and elevation resulting from better modes of life, must be damped by the gloomy consciousness of being under an almost inevitable doom to sink back into a situation which we recollect with disgust. It surely may be prevented, by constant attention and unremitting exertion to establish contrary habits of superior efficacy.

"The Beggars Opera," and the common question, whether it was pernicious in its effects, having been introduced,—JOHNSON "As to this matter, which has been very much contested, I myself am of opinion, that more influence has been ascribed to 'The Beggars Opera,' than it in reality ever had, for I do not believe that any man was ever made a rogue by being present at its representation. At the same time I do not deny that it may have some influence,

¹ See Vol II, p page 548

¹ Mrs Harris, who was also one of the guests, was not so favourably impressed

"Tuesday, April, 1775—Dr Johnson, his fellow-traveller through the Scotch Western Isles, Mr Boswell, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, dined here. I have long wished to be in company with this said Johnson. His conversation is the same as his writing, but a dreadful voice and manner. He is certainly amusing as a novelty, but seems not possessed of any benevo-

lence, is beyond all description awkward, and more beastly in his dress and person than anything I ever beheld. He feeds nastily and furiously, and eats quantities most unthankfully. As to Boswell, he appears a low-bred kind of being"—*Letters of first Earl of Malmesbury*, i. 703

² Boswell thus deserves the credit of this saying, which was repeated by Lord Plunket. The latter, however, was unfairly accused of having stated that "all history was no better than an old almanac"

by making the character of a rogue familiar, and in some degree pleasing." Then collecting himself, as it were, to give a heavy stroke "There is in it such a *labefaction* of all principles, as may be injurious to morality."

While he pronounced this response, we sat in a comical sort of restraint, smothering a laugh, which we were afraid might burst out. In his *Life of Gay*, he has been still more decisive as to the inefficiency of "The Beggars Opera," in corrupting society. But I have ever thought somewhat differently, for, indeed, not only are the gaiety and heroism of a highwayman very captivating to a youthful imagination, but the arguments for adventurous depredation are so plausible, the allusions so lively, and the contrasts with the ordinary and more painful modes of acquiring property are so artfully displayed, that it requires a cool and strong judgement to resist so imposing an aggregate. yet, I own, I should be very sorry to have "The Beggars Opera" suppressed, for there is in it so much of real London life, so much brilliant wit, and such a variety of airs, which, from early association of ideas, engage, soothe, and enliven the mind, that no performance which the theatre exhibits, delights me more.¹

The late "worthy" Duke of Queensberry, as Thomson, in his "Seasons," justly characterises him, told me, that when Gay first shewed him "The Beggars Opera," his Grace's observation was, "This is a very odd thing, Gay, I am satisfied that it is either a very good thing or a very bad thing." It proved the former, beyond the warmest expectations of the authour or his friends. Mr Cambridge, however, shewed us to day, that there was good reason enough to doubt concerning its success. He was told by Quin, that during the first night of its appearance it was long in a very dubious state, that there was a disposition to damn it, and that it was saved by the song, "Oh ponder well, be not severe." Quin

* A very eminent physician, whose discernment is as acute and penetrating in judging of the human character as it is in his own profession, remarked once at a club where I was, that a lively young man, fond of pleasure and without money, would hardly resist a solicitation from his mistress to go upon the highway, immediately after being present at the representation of "The Beggars Opera." I have been told of an ingenious observation by Mr Gibbon, that "The Beggars Opera may, perhaps, have sometimes increased the number of highwaymen, but that it has had a beneficial effect in refining that class of men, making them less ferocious, more polite, in short, more like gentlemen." Upon this Mr Courtenay said, that "Gay was the Orpheus of highwaymen."

Cor et Ad—Line 31 After "severe," *read*, "The audience being much affected

¹ The subject was a favourite one with Boswell, and it is known that he had made collections for the purpose of publishing a quarto volume on "The Beggars

Opera." It was said, too, that his many visits to Newgate, attending on convicts, &c., were with a view to this publication.

himself had so bad an opinion of it, that he refused the part of Captain Macheath, and gave it to Walker, who acquired great celebrity by his grave yet animated performance of it.

We talked of a young gentleman's marriage with an eminent singer,¹ and his determination that she should no longer sing in publick, though his father was very earnest² she should, because her talents would be liberally rewarded so as to make her a good fortune. It was questioned whether the young gentleman, who had not a shilling in the world, but was blest with very uncommon talents, was not foolishly delicate, or foolishly proud, and his father truly rational without being mean. Johnson, with all the high spirit of a Roman senator, exclaimed, "He resolved wisely and nobly to be sure. He is a brave man. Would not a gentleman be disgraced by having his wife singing publicly for hire? No, Sir, there can be no doubt here. I know not if I should not *prepare* myself for a publick singer, as readily as let my wife be one."

Johnson arraigned the modern politicks of this country, as entirely devoid of all principle of whatever kind. "Politicks (said he) are now nothing more than means of rising in the world. With this sole view do men engage in politicks, and their whole conduct proceeds upon it. How different in that respect is the state of the nation now from what it was in the time of Charles the First, during the Usurpation, and after the Restoration, in the time of Charles the Second. Hudibras affords a strong proof how much hold political principles had then upon the minds of men. There is in Hudibras a great deal of bullion, which will always last. But to be sure the brightest strokes of his wit owed their force to the impression of the characters, which was upon men's minds at the time, to their knowing them, at table and in the street, in short, being familiar with them, and above all, to his satire being directed against those whom a little while before they had hated and feared. The nation in general has ever been loyal, has been at all times attached to the monarch, though a few daring rebels have been wonderfully powerful for a time. The murder of Charles the First was undoubtedly not committed with the approbation or consent of the people. Had that been the case, parliament would not have ventured to consign the regicides to their deserved punishment. And we know what exuberance of joy by the innocent looks of Polly, when she came to those two lines, which exhibit at once a painful and ridiculous image,

'For on the rope that hangs my Dear,
Depends poor Polly's life',

¹ Miss Linley

² It was *her* father, not Sheridan's,

that was so earnest — *Moore's Life of Sheridan*, i 115

there was when Charles the Second was restored. If Charles the Second had bent all his mind to it, had made it his sole object, he might have been as absolute as Louis the Fourteenth." A gentleman observed he would have done no harm if he had. JOHNSON "Why, Sir, absolute princes seldom do any harm. But they who are governed by them are governed by chance. There is no security for good government." CAMBRIDGE "There have been many sad victims to absolute power." JOHNSON. "So, Sir, have there been to popular factions." BOSWELL. "The question is, which is worst, one wild beast or many?"

Johnson praised "The SPECTATOR," particularly the character of Sir Roger de Coverley. He said, "Sir Roger did not die a violent death, as had been generally fancied. He was not killed; he died only because others were to die, and because his death afforded an opportunity to Addison for some very fine writing. We have the example of Cervantes making Don Quixote die—I never could see why Sir Roger is represented as a little cracked. It appears to me that the story of the widow was intended to have something superinduced upon it, but the superstructure did not come."

Somebody found fault with writing verses in a dead language, maintaining that they were merely arrangements of so many words, and laughed at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, for sending forth collections of them not only in Greek and Latin, but even in Syriack, Arabick and other more unknown tongues. JOHNSON "I would have as many of these as possible, I would have verses in every language that there are the means of acquiring. Nobody imagines that an University is to have at once two hundred poets, but it should be able to shew two hundred scholars. Persec's death was lamented I think, in forty languages. And I would have at every coronation, and every death of a King, every *Gaudium*, and every *Luctus*, University verses in as many languages as can be acquired. I would have the world to be thus told, 'Here is a school where every thing may be learnt'."

Having set out next day on a visit to the Earl of Pembroke, at Wilton, and to my friend, Mr Temple, at Mamhead, in Devonshire, and not having returned to town till the second of May,¹ I did not see Dr. Johnson for a considerable time, and during the remaining

¹ General Iach and I," wrote Boswell to Temple, "shall be at Wilton, I should suppose we may stay there till Saturday. I shall take the fly at Salisbury and so get to Exeter. Write to me at Wilton by Salisbury, and I will let you know what day I can be at Exeter. I shall not have it in my power to be

with you more than two or three days, as I must see Brth and be back here by the first of May, but we shall see what is to be done when we meet. By all means let us dine with Lord Clifford. Lord Lisburne and I have never met yet. I hope to see him when I return."

part of my stay in London, kept very imperfect notes of his conversation, which had I according to my usual custom written out at large soon after the time, much might have been preserved, which is now irretrievably lost. I can now only record some particular scenes, and a few fragments of his *memorabilia*. But to make some amends for my relaxation of diligence in one respect, I have to present my readers with arguments upon two law cases, with which he favoured me.

On Saturday, the sixth of May, we dined by ourselves at the Mitre, and he dictated to me what follows, to obviate the complaint already mentioned,* which had been made in the form of an action in the Court of Session, by Dr Mémis, of Aberdeen, that in the same translation of a charter in which *physicians* were mentioned, he was called *Doctor of Medicine*.

"THERE are but two reasons for which a physician can decline the title of *Doctor of Medicine*, because he supposes himself disgraced by the doctorship or supposes the doctorship disgraced by himself. To be disgraced by a title which he shares in common with every illustrious name of his profession, with Boerhaave, with Arbuthnot, and with Cullen, can surely diminish no man's reputation. It is, I suppose, to the doctorate, from which he shrinks, that he owes his right of practising physick. A Doctor of Medicine is a physician under the protection of the laws, and by the stamp of authority. The physician who is not a doctor, usurps a profession, and is authorised only by himself to decide upon health and sickness, and life and death. That this gentleman is a Doctor, his diploma makes evident, a diploma not obtruded upon him, but obtained by solicitation, and for which fees were paid. With what countenance any man can refuse the title which he has either begged or bought, is not easily discovered.

"All verbal injury must comprise in it either some false position, or some unnecessary declaration of defamatory truth. That in calling him Doctor, a false appellation was given him, he himself will not pretend, who at the same time that he complains of the title, would be offended if we supposed him to be not a Doctor. If the title of doctor be a defamatory truth, it is time to dissolve our colleges, for why should the publick give salaries to men whose approbation is reproach? It may likewise deserve the notice of the publick to consider what help can be given to the professors of physick, who all share with this unhappy gentleman the ignominious appellation, and of whom the very boys in the street are not afraid to say, *There goes the Doctor*.

* Vol I., page 510.

"What is implied by the term Doctor is well known. It distinguishes him to whom it is granted, as a man who has attained such knowledge of his profession as qualifies him to instruct others. A Doctor of Laws is a man who can form lawyers by his precepts. A Doctor of Medicine is a man who can teach the art of curing diseases. There is an old axiom which no man has yet thought fit to deny, *Nil dat quod non habet*. Upon this principle to be a Doctor implies skill, for *nemo docet quod non didicit*. In England, whoever practises physick, not being a Doctor, must practice by a licence. but the doctorate conveys a licence in itself.

"By what accident it happened that he and the other physicians were mentioned in different terms, where the terms themselves were equivalent, or where in effect that which was applied to him was the more honourable, perhaps they who wrote the paper cannot now remember. Had they expected a lawsuit to have been the consequence of such petty variation, I hope they would have avoided it." But, probably, as they meant no ill, they suspected no danger, and, therefore, consulted only what appeared to them propriety or convenience."

A few days afterwards I consulted him upon a cause, *Paterson and others* against *Alexander and others*, which had been decided by a casting vote in the Court of Session, determining that the Corporation of Stirling was corrupt, and setting aside the election of some of their officers, because it was proved that three of the leading men who influenced the majority, had entered into an unjustifiable compact, of which, however, the majority were ignorant. He dictated to me, after a little consideration, the following sentences upon the subject.

"THERE is a difference between majority and superiority; majority is applied to number, and superiority to power, and power, like many other things, is to be estimated *non numero sed pondere*. Now though the greater number is not corrupt, the greater weight is corrupt, so that corruption predominates in the borough, taken collectively, though, perhaps, taken numerically, the greater part may be uncorrupt. That borough which is so constituted as to act corruptly, is in the eye of reason corrupt, whether it be by the uncontrollable power of a few, or by an accidental pravity of the multitude. The objection, in which is urged the injustice of making the innocent suffer with the guilty, is an objection not only against society, but against the possibility of society. All societies, great

* In justice to Dr. Memis, though I was against him as an Advocate, I must mention, that he objected to the variation very earnestly, before the translation was printed off.

and small, subsist upon this condition, that as the individuals derive advantages from union, they may likewise suffer inconveniences, that as those who do nothing and sometimes those who do ill, will have the honours and emoluments of general virtue and general prosperity, so those likewise who do nothing or perhaps do well, must be involved in the consequences of predominant corruption."

This in my opinion was a very nice case, but the decision was affirmed in the House of Lords

On Monday, May 8, we went together and visited the mansions of Bedlam I had been informed that he had once been there before with Mr Wedderburne, (now Lord Loughborough,) Mr Murphy, and Mr Foote, and I had heard Foote give a very entertaining account of Johnson's happening to have his attention arrested by a man who was very furious, and who, while beating his straw, supposed it to be William Duke of Cumberland, whom he was punishing for his cruelties in Scotland in 1746 There was nothing peculiarly remarkable this day, but the general contemplation of insanity was very affecting. I accompanied him home, and dined and drank tea with him

Talking of an acquaintance of ours, distinguished for knowing an uncommon variety of miscellaneous articles both in antiquities and polite literature, he observed, "You know, Sir, he runs about with little weight upon his mind" And talking of another very ingenious gentleman, who from the warmth of his temper was at variance with many of his acquaintance, and wished to avoid them, he said, "Sir, he leads the life of an outlaw"¹

On Friday, May 12, as he had been so good as to assign me a room in his house, where I might sleep occasionally, when I happened to sit with him to a late hour, I took possession of it this night, found every thing in excellent order, and was attended by honest Francis with a most civil assiduity² I asked him whether I might go to a consultation with another lawyer upon Sunday, as

Cor et Ad—Line 16 On 1746 put the following note—"My very honourable friend General Sir George Howard, who served in the Duke of Cumberland's army, has assured me that the cruelties were not imputable to his Royal Highness"

¹ The first allusion is probably to Percy, the second to the ill-conditioned and malignant Steevens

² Paoli also had given him a room at his house, and "the command of his coach" "All cards and messages of every kind were taken in there for me I felt more dignity when I had several servants at my devotion, a large apart-

ment, and the convenience and state of a coach I recollected that *this dignity in London* was honourably acquired by my travels abroad, and my pen after I came home, so I could enjoy it with my own approbation" He had left his rooms in Gerard-street, Soho, to oblige his landlord, who had found a lodger that would remain longer—*Letters to Temple*

what appeared to me to be doing work as much in my way, as if an artisan should work on the day appropriated for religious rest. JOHNSON "Why, Sir, when you are of consequence enough to oppose the practice of consulting upon Sunday, you should do it. but you may go now. It is not criminal, though it is not what one should do, who is anxious for the preservation and increase of piety, to which a peculiar observance of Sunday is a great help. The distinction is clear between what is of moral and what is of ritual obligation."

On Saturday, May 13, I breakfasted with him by invitation, accompanied by Mr. Andrew Crosbie, a Scotch Advocate, whom he had seen at Edinburgh, and the Hon. Colonel (now General) Edward Stopford, brother to Lord Courtown, who was desirous of being introduced to him. His tea and rolls and butter, and whole breakfast apparatus were all in such decorum, and his behaviour was so courteous, that Colonel Stopford was quite surprized, and wondered at his having heard so much said of Johnson's slovenliness and roughness. I have preserved nothing of what passed, except that Crosbie pleased him much by talking learnedly of alchemy, as to which Johnson was not a positive unbeliever, but rather delighted in considering what progress had actually been made in the transmutation of metals, what near approaches there had been to the making of gold, and told us that it was affirmed, that a person in the Russian dominions had discovered the secret, but died without revealing it, as imagining it would be prejudicial to society. He added, that it was not impossible but it might in time be generally known.

It being asked whether it was reasonable for a man to be angry at another whom a woman had preferred to him, —JOHNSON "I do not see, Sir, that it is reasonable for a man to be angry at another, whom a woman has preferred to him. but angry he is, no doubt, and he is loath to be angry at himself."

Before setting out for Scotland on the 23rd, I was frequently in his company at different places, but during this period have recorded only two remarks. one concerning Garrick. "He has not Latin enough. He finds out the Latin by the meaning, rather than the meaning by the Latin." And another concerning writers of travels, who, he observed, "were more defective than any other writers."

I passed many hours with him on the 17th, of which I find all my memorial is, "much laughing"¹. It would seem he had that

¹ Boswell does not mention that the scene of this "much laughing" was Streatham. "I am now at Mr. Thrale's

villa at Streatham—a delightful spot. Dr. Johnson is here too. I came yesterday to dinner, and this morning Dr.

day been in a humour for jocularity and merriment, and upon such occasions I never knew a man laugh more heartily. We may suppose, that the high relish of a state so different from his habitual gloom, produced more than ordinary exertions of that distinguishing faculty of man, which has puzzled philosophers so much to explain. Johnson's laugh was as remarkable as any circumstance in his manner. It was a kind of good humoured growl. Tom Davies described it drolly enough: "He laughs like a rhinoceros."¹

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—I make no doubt but you are now safely lodged in your own habitation, and have told all your adventures to Mrs. Boswell and Miss Veronica. Pray teach Veronica to love me. Bid her not mind mamma.

"Mrs Thrale has taken cold, and been very much disordered, but I hope is grown well. Mr Langton went yesterday to Lincolnshire, and has invited Nicolaida* to follow him. Beauclerk talks of

* A learned Greek

Cor et Ad—After line 8, read—

"TO BENNET LANGTON ESQ

"DEAR SIR,—I have an old ammuensis in great distress. I have given what I think I can give, and begged till I cannot tell where to beg again. I put into his hands this morning four guineas. If you could collect three guineas more, it would clear him from his present difficulty. I am, Sir

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"May 21, 1775"

Johnson and I return to London; and I go with Mr Beauclerk to see his elegant villa and library (worth 3000*l*.) at Muswell Hill, near Highgate, and return and dine with him. I hope Dr Johnson will dine with us. On Saturday last I dined with John Wilkes and his daughter, and nobody else, at the Mansion House, it was a most pleasant scene. I had that day breakfasted with Dr Johnson. I drank tea with Lord Bute's daughter-in-law, and I supped with Miss Boswell. What variety! Mr Johnson went with me to Beauclerk's villa, Beauclerk having been ill, it is delightful just at Highgate. He has one of the most numerous and splendid private libraries that I ever saw, greenhouses, hot-houses, observatory, laboratory for chemical experiments—in short, everything princely. We dined with him at his box at the Adelphi."—*Bos Lett*, 193

¹ Boswell thus describes his last day in London—"After breakfasting with Pauli and worshipping at St. Paul's, I

dined *tête-à-tête* with my charming Mrs. Stuart, of whom you have heard in my journal, she refused to be of a party at Richmond that she and I might enjoy a farewell interview. We dined in all the elegance of two courses and a dessert, with dumb-waiters, except when the second course and the dessert were served. We talked with unreserved freedom, as we had nothing to fear. We were *philosophical*, upon honour, not deep, but feeling, we were pious, we drank tea and bid each other adieu as finely as romance paints. She is my wife's dearest friend, so you see how beautiful our intimacy is. I then went to Mr Johnson's, and he accompanied me to Dilly's, where we supped, and then he went with me to the inn in Holborn, where the Newcastle fly sets out. We were warmly affectionate. He is to buy for me a chest of books of his choosing off stalls, and I am to read more and drink less—that was his counsel."

going to Bath. I am to set out on Monday, so there is nothing but dispersion

"I have returned Lord Hailes's entertaining sheets, but must stay till I come back for more, because it will be inconvenient to send them after me in my vagrant state.

"I promised Mrs Macaulay^a that I would try to serve her son at Oxford. I have not forgotten it, nor am unwilling to perform it. If they desire to give him an English education, it should be considered whether they cannot send him for a year or two to an English school. If he comes immediately from Scotland, he can make no figure in our Universities. The schools in the north, I believe, are cheap, and, when I was a young man, were eminently good

"There are two little books published by the Foulis, Telemachus and Collins's Poems, each a shilling, I would be glad to have them.

"Make my compliments to Mrs Boswell, though she does not love me. You see what perverse things ladies are, and how little fit to be trusted with feudal estates. When she mends and loves me, there may be more hope of her daughters

"I will not send compliments to my friends by name, because I would be loath to leave any out in the enumeration. Tell them, as you see them, how well I speak of Scotch politeness, and Scotch hospitality, and Scotch beauty, and of every thing Scotch, but Scotch oat-cakes and Scotch prejudices

"Let me know the answer of Rasay, and the decision relating to Sir Allan^b. I am, my dearest Sir, with great affection,

"Your most obliged and most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON

"May 27, 1775 "

After my return to Scotland, I wrote three letters to him, from which I extract the following passages :

"I have seen Lord Hailes since I came down. He thinks it wonderful that you are pleased to take so much pains in revising his 'Annals'. I told him that you said you were well rewarded by the entertainment which you had in reading them."

"There has been a numerous flight of Hebrideans in Edinburgh this summer, whom I have been happy to entertain at my house.

^a Wife of the Reverend Mr Kenneth Macaulay, author of "The History of St. Kilda."

^b A law suit carried on by Sir Allan Maclean, Chief of his Clan, to recover certain parts of his family estate from the Duke of Argyll.

Mr Donald Macqueen* and Lord Monboddie supped with me one evening They joined in controverting your proposition, that the Gaelick of the Highlands and Isles of Scotland was not written till of late "

"My mind has been somewhat dark this summer¹ I have need of your warming and vivifying rays, and I hope I shall have them frequently I am going to pass some time with my father at Auchinleck "

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq

"DEAR SIR,—I am now returned from the annual ramble into the middle counties Having seen nothing that I had not seen before, I have nothing to relate Time has left that part of the island few antiquities, and commerce has left the people no singularities. I was glad to go abroad, and, perhaps, glad to come home, which is, in other words, I was, I am afraid, weary of being at home, and weary of being abroad Is not this the state of life? But, if we confess this weariness, let us not lament it, for all the wise and all the good say, that we may cure it

"For the black fumes which rise in your mind, I can prescribe nothing but that you disperse them by honest business or innocent pleasures, and by reading sometimes easy and sometimes serious. Change of place is useful, and I hope that your residence at Auchinleck will have many good effects * * *

"That I should have given pain to Rasay, I am sincerely sorry, and am therefore very much pleased that he is no longer uneasy. He still thinks that I have represented him as personally giving up the Chieftainship I meant only that it was no longer contested between the two houses, and supposed it settled, perhaps, by the cession of some remote generation, in the house of Dunvegan. I am sorry the advertisement was not continued for three or four times in the papers

* A very learned minister in the Isle of Sky, whom both Dr Johnson and I have mentioned with regard

¹ "I have had a pretty severe return this summer of that melancholy or hypochondria," writes Boswell to his friend Temple, about this time "While gloomy, and fretful, and grossly indolent, I was shocked with the recollection of my good spirits, gaiety, and activity, as a man with a headache is shocked by bright sun beams The strange thing was that I did not write you a few lines merely as firing guns of distress"—(*Letters*, p. 209)

The state of his mind was indeed more serious than it appeared to Johnson "I awake in the night," he writes, "dreading annihilation, or being thrown into some horrible state of being The other night when I was gloomy, I felt a strong impression or recollection of the phrase in Scripture, 'Seek ye the Lord while He may be found.'" All this was perhaps, the gloom after some debauch

"That Lord Monboddo and Mr. Macqueen should controvert a position contrary to the imaginary interest of literary or national prejudice, might be easily imagined; but of a standing fact there ought to be no controversy. If there are men with tails, catch an *homo caudatus*, if there was writing of old in the Highlands or Hebrides in the Erse language, produce the manuscripts. Where men write, they will write to one another, and some of their letters, in families studious of their ancestry, will be kept. In Wales there are many manuscripts.

"I have now three parcels of Lord Hailes's history, which I purpose to return all the next week that his respect for my little observations should keep his work in suspense, makes one of the evils of my journey. It is in our language, I think, a new mode of history, which tells all that is wanted, and, I suppose, all that is known, without laboured splendour of language, or affected subtilty of conjecture. The exactness of his dates raises my wonder. He seems to have the closeness of Henault without his constraint.

"Mrs. Thrale was so entertained with your 'Journal,'^a that she almost read herself blind. She has a great regard for you.¹

"Of Mrs. Boswell, though she knows in her heart that she does not love me, I am always glad to hear any good, and hope that she and the little dear ladies will have neither sickness nor any other affliction. But she knows that she does not care what becomes of me, and for that she may be sure that I think her very much to blame.

"Never, my dear Sir, do you take it into your head to think that I do not love you, you may settle yourself in full confidence both of my love and my esteem, I love you as a kind man, I value you as a worthy man, and hope in time to reverence you as a man of exemplary piety. I hold you as Hamlet has it, 'in my heart of heart,' and, therefore, it is little to say, that I am, Sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.

"London, August 27, 1775."

^a My 'Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides,' which that lady read in the original manuscript.²

¹ N. T. writes the lady in the margin of his copy—never had I thought him so comical and a clever fellow."

² Boswell was growing eager to publish his tour in some shape. Dr. Johnson, he writes to Temple, on April 4, "has allowed me to write out a supplement to his journey, but I wish I may be able to settle to it." But a month later

he found serious difficulties in the way.

I have now written out another line of my remarks on the Hebrides. I found it impossible to do it in London. Besides Dr. Johnson does not seem very desirous that I should publish any supplement. *Between ourselves, he is not apt to encourage one to share reputation with himself.*"—*Bos. Let.* 192.

To the same.

"SIR,—If in these papers,* there is little alteration attempted, do not suppose me negligent I have read them perhaps more closely than the rest; but I find nothing worthy of an objection

"Write to me soon, and write often, and tell me all your honest heart.

"I am, Sir,

"Yours affectionately,

"August 30, 1775 "

"SAM. JOHNSON.

To the same.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I now write to you, lest in some of your freaks and humours you should fancy yourself neglected Such fancies I must entreat you never to admit, at least never to indulge, for my regard for you is so radicated and fixed, that it is become part of my mind, and cannot be effaced but by some cause uncommonly violent, therefore, whether I write or not, set your thoughts at rest. I now write to tell you that I shall not very soon write again, for I am to set out to-morrow on another journey

* * * * *

"Your friends are all well at Streatham, and in Leicester-fields. Make my compliments to Mrs Boswell, if she is in good humour with me.

"I am, Sir, &c

"September 14, 1775 "

"SAM JOHNSON.

What he mentions in such light terms as, "I am to set out to-morrow on another journey," I soon afterwards discovered was no less than a tour to France with Mr and Mrs Thrale. This was the only time in his life that he went upon the Continent.

* Another parcel of Lord Hailes's "Annals of Scotland "
Second Edition, note, line 20—Where Sir Joshua Reynolds lived.
Cor et Ad—Line 28, after "continent" read—

"TO MR ROBERT LEVET

"Sept 18, 1775, Calais.

"DEAR SIR,—We are here in France, after a very pleasing passage of no more than six hours I know not when I shall write again, and therefore I write now, though you cannot suppose that I have much to say You have seen France yourself From this place we are going to Rouen, and from Rouen to Paris, where Mr Thrale designs to stay about five or six weeks We have a regular recommendation to the English resident, so we shall not be taken for vagabonds We think to go one way and return another, and for as much as we can, I will try to speak a little French, I tried hitherto but little, but I spoke sometimes If I heard better, I suppose I should learn faster I am, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON "

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Oct 24, 1775

"MY DEAR SIR,—If I had not been informed that you were at Paris, you should have had a letter from me by the earliest opportunity, announcing the birth of my Son, on the 9th instant, I have named him Alexander, after my father¹ I now write, as I suppose your fellow traveller, Mr Thrale, will return to London this week to attend his duty in parliament, and that you will not stay behind him

"I send another parcel of Lord Hailes's 'Annals' I have undertaken to solicit you for a favour to him, which he thus requests in a letter to me 'I intend soon to give you the "Life of Robert Bruce," which you will be pleased to transmit to Dr Johnson I wish that you could assist me in a fancy which I have taken, of getting Dr Johnson to draw a character of Robert Bruce, from the account that I give of that prince If he finds materials for it in my work, it will be a proof that I have been fortunate in selecting the most striking incidents'

"I suppose by '*The Life of Robert Bruce*,' his Lordship means

TO THE SAME

"Paris, Oct 22, 1775

"DEAR SIR,—We are still here, commonly very busy in looking about us We have been to day at Versailles You have seen it, and I shall not describe it We came yesterday from Fontainebleau, where the Court is now We went to see the King and Queen at dinner, and the Queen was so impressed by Miss,^a that she sent one of the Gentlemen to inquire who she was I find all true that you have ever told me at Paris Mr Thrale is very liberal, and keeps us two coaches, and a very fine table, but I think our cookery very bad Mrs Thrale got into a convent of English nuns, and I talked with her through the grate, and I am very kindly used by the English Benedictine nuns But upon the whole I cannot make much acquaintance here, and though the churches, palaces, and some private houses are very magnificent, there is no very great pleasure after having seen many, in seeing more, at least the pleasure, whatever it be, must some time have an end, and we are beginning to think when we shall come home Mr Thrale calculates that as we left Streatham on the fifteenth of September, we shall see it again about the fifteenth of November

"I think I had not been on this side of the sea five days before I found a sensible improvement in my health I ran a race in the rain this day, and beat Baretta Baretta is a fine fellow, and speaks French, I think, quite as well as English

"Make my compliments to Mrs Williams, and give my love to Frances, and tell my friends that I am not lost I am, dear Sir,

"Your affectionate humble, &c

"SAM JOHNSON"

^a Miss Thrale.

¹ "Let me inform you that last night (Oct. 9, 1775) my wife was safely delivered of a son My wife was very

all in her labour, but is in a good way"—*Boswell's Letters*, 217

that part of his 'Annals' which relates the history of that prince, and not a separate work.

"Shall we have '*A Journey to Paris*' from you in the winter? You will, I hope, at any rate be kind enough to give me some account of your French travels very soon, for I am very impatient. What a different scene have you viewed this autumn, from that which you viewed in autumn 1773¹ I ever am, my dear Sir,

"Your much obliged, and affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

To JAMES BOSWELL Esq

"DEAR SIR,—I am glad that the young Laird is born, and an end, as I hope, put to the only difference that you can ever have with Mrs Boswell^a I know that she does not love me, but I intend to persist in wishing her well till I get the better of her

"Paris is, indeed, a place very different from the Hebrides, but it is to a hasty traveller not so fertile of novelty, nor affords so many opportunities of remark I cannot pretend to tell the publick any thing of a place better known to many of my readers than to myself We can talk of it when we meet

"I shall go next week to Streatham, from whence I purpose to send a parcel of the 'History' every post Concerning the character of Bruce, I can only say, that I do not see any great reason for writing it, but I shall not easily deny what Lord Hailes and you concur in desiring.

"I have been remarkably healthy all the journey and hope you and your family have known only that trouble and danger which has so happily terminated Among all the congratulations that you may receive, I hope you believe none more warm and sincere, than those of, dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"November 16, 1775"

To Mrs LUCY PORTER, in Lichfield^b

"DEAR MADAM,—This week I came home from Paris. I have brought you a little box, which I thought pretty but I know not

^a This alludes to my old feudal principle of preferring male to female succession

^b There can be no doubt that many years previous to 1775, he corresponded with this lady, who was his step-daughter, but none of his earlier letters to her have been preserved¹

¹ Boswell learned from Miss Seward probably did not like to own that Miss Porter had declined to let him see them.

whether it is properly a snuff-box, or a box for some other use. I will send it, when I can find an opportunity. I have been through the whole journey remarkably well. My fellow-travellers were the same whom you saw at Lichfield, only we took Baretti with us. Paris is not so fine a place as you would expect. The palaces and churches, however, are very splendid and magnificent, and what would please you, there are many very fine pictures, but I do not think their way of life commodious or pleasant.

"Let me know how your health has been all this while. I hope the fine summer has given you strength sufficient to encounter the winter.

"Make my compliments to all my friends, and, if your fingers will let you, write to me, or let your maid write, if it be troublesome to you. I am, dear Madam,

"Your most affectionate humble servant,

"Nov 16, 1775"

"SAM JOHNSON

To the same

"DEAR MADAM,—Some weeks ago I wrote to you, to tell you that I was just come home from a ramble, and hoped that I should have heard from you. I am afraid winter has laid hold on your fingers, and hinders you from writing. However, let somebody write, if you cannot, and tell me how you do, and a little of what has happened at Lichfield among our friends. I hope you are all well.

"When I was in France, I thought myself growing young, but am afraid that cold weather will take part of my new vigour from me. Let us, however, take care of ourselves, and lose no part of our health by negligence.

"I never knew whether you received the *Commentary on the New Testament*, and the *Travels*, and the glasses.

"Do, my dear love, write to me, and do not let us forget each other. This is the season of good wishes, and I wish you all good. I have not lately seen Mr. Porter,* nor heard of him. Is he with you?

"Be pleased to make my compliments to Mrs. Adey, and Mrs. Cobb, and all my friends, and when I can do any good, let me know. I am, dear Madam,

"Yours most affectionately,

"December, 1775"

"SAM. JOHNSON

It is to be regretted, that he did not write an account of his

* Son of Mrs Johnson, by her first husband.

* Another brother of Miss Porter's, who was in the navy, had died, leaving her about ten thousand pounds, a por-

tion of which she expended in building a house

travels in France, for as he is reported to have once said, that "he could write the Life of a Broomstick," so, notwithstanding so many former travellers have exhausted almost every thing subject for remark in that great kingdom, his very accurate observation, and peculiar vigour of thought and illustration, would have produced a valuable work. During his visit to it, which lasted but about two months, he wrote notes or minutes of what he saw. He promised to shew me them, but I neglected to put him in mind of it, and the greatest part of them have been lost, or, perhaps, destroyed in that precipitate burning of his papers a few days before his death, which must ever be lamented. One small paper-book, however, entitled "FRANCE, II" has been preserved, and is in my possession. It is a diurnal register of his life and observations, from the 10th of October to the 4th of November, inclusive, being twenty-six days, and shews an extraordinary attention to various minute particulars. Being the only memorial of this tour that remains, my readers, I am confident, will peruse it with pleasure, though his notes are very short, and evidently written only to assist his own recollection.

"OCT. 10. Tuesday. We saw the *Ecole Militaire*, in which one hundred and fifty young boys are educated for the army. They have arms of different sizes, according to the age, —flints of wood. The building is very large, but nothing fine, except the council-room. The French have large squares in the windows, —they make good iron palisades. Their meals are gross.

"We visited the Observatory, a large building of a great height. The upper stones of the parapet very large, but not cramped with iron. The flat on the top is very extensive, but on the insulated part there is no parapet. Though it was broad enough, I did not care to go upon it. Maps were printing in one of the rooms.

"We walked to a small convent of the Fathers of the Oratory. In the reading-desk of the relectory lay the Lives of the Saints.

"OCT. 11. Wednesday. We went to see *Hôtel de Chatlois*, a house not very large, but very elegant. One of the rooms was gilt to a degree that I never saw before. The upper part for servants and their masters was pretty.

"Thence we went to Mr. Monville's, a house divided into small apartments, furnished with effeminate and minute elegance — Porphyry.

"Thence we went to St. Roque's church, which is very large, — the lower part of the pillars incrustated with marble. — Three chapels

behind the high altar,—the last a mass of low arches—Altars, I believe, all round

“We passed through *Place de Vendôme*, a fine square, about as big as Hanover square—Inhabited by the high families—Lewis XIV on horseback in the middle

“Monville is the son of a farmer general In the house of Chatlois is a room furnished with japan, fitted up in Europe

“We dined with Boccage, the Marquis Blanchetti, and his lady.—The sweetmeats taken by the Marchioness Blanchetti, after observing that they were dear—Mr Le Roy, Count Manucci the Abbe, the Prior, and father Wilson, who staid with me, till I took him home in the coach.

“Bathuan is gone

“The French have no laws for the maintenance of their poor—Monk not necessarily a priest—Benedictines rise at four,—are at church an hour and half, at church again half an hour before, half an hour after dinner, and again from half an hour after seven to eight They may sleep eight hours—Bodily labour wanted in monasteries

“The poor taken to hospitals, and miserably kept—Monks in the convent fifteen—accounted poor

“Oct 12 Thursday. We went to the Gobelins—Tapestry makes a good picture,—imitates flesh exactly—One piece with a gold ground—the birds not exactly coloured—Thence we went to the King's cabinet,—very neat, not, perhaps, perfect—Gold ore—Candles of the candle tree—Sceds—Woods—Thence to Gagnier's house, where I saw rooms nine, furnished with a profusion of wealth and elegance which I never have seen before—Vases—Pictures—The dial on china—The lustre said to be of crystal, and to have cost 3,500l—The whole furniture said to have cost 125,000l—Damask hangings covered with pictures—Porphyry.—This house struck me—Then we waited on the ladies to Monville's—Captain Irwin with us—Spain County towns all beggars—At Dijon he could not find the way to Orleans—Cross roads of France very bad—Five soldiers—Woman—Soldiers escaped—The Colonel would not lose five men for the death of one woman—The magistrate cannot seize a soldier but by the Colonel's permission—Good inn at Nîmes—Mooris of Barbary fond of Englishmen—Gibraltar eminently wealthy,—it has beef from Barbary.—There is a large garden—Soldiers sometimes fall from the rock.

* The rest of this paragraph appears to be a minute of what was told by Captain Irwin

"Oct 13 Friday. I staid at home all day, only went to find the Prior, who was not at home.—I read something in Canus*—*Nec admiror, nec multum laudo*

"Oct 14 Saturday We went to the house of Mr. Argenson, which was almost wainscotted with looking-glasses, and covered with gold—The ladies closet wainscotted with large squares of glass over painted paper They always place mirrors to reflect their rooms

"Then we went to Julien's, the Treasurer of the Clergy — 30,000*l.* a year—The house has no very large room, but is set with mirrors, and covered with gold—Books of wood here, and in another library

"At D———'s¹ I looked into the books in the lady's closet, and, in contempt, shewed them to Mr T—*Prince Titz*,² *Bibliæcæ*, and other books—She was offended, and shut up, as we heard afterwards, her apartment

"Then we went to Julien Le Roy, the King's watch-maker, a man of character in his business, who shewed a small clock made to find the longitude—A decent man

"Afterward we saw the *Palais Marchand*, and the Courts of Justice, civil and criminal—Queries on the *Sellette*—This building has the old Gothick passages, and a great appearance of antiquity.—Three hundred prisoners sometimes in the gaol.

"Much disturbed,—hope no ill will be"

"In the afternoon I visited Mr Freron the journalist He spoke Latin very scantily, but seemed to understand me—His house not splendid, but of commodious size—His family, wife, son, and daughter, not elevated but decent—I was pleased with my reception—He is to translate my book, which I am to send him with notes

"Oct 15 Sunday At Choisi, a royal palace on the banks of the Seine, about 7 m from Paris—The terrace noble along the river—The rooms numerous and grand, but not discriminated from other palaces—The chapel beautiful, but small.—China globes—Inlaid table.—Labyrinth—Sinking table—Toilet tables

"Oct 16 Monday The Palais Royal very grand, large, and

* Melchior Canus, a celebrated Spanish Dominican, who died at Toledo, in 1560. He wrote a treatise *De Locis Theologicis* in twelve books

¹ This passage, which some may think superstitious reminds me of Archbishop Laud's Diary

11th Edition—"Some may, altered to so many

² Probably D'Argenson

³ Lord Macaulay and Mr Croker had an angry discussion on the trivial point whether this work was the fury tale

found in the common collections, or a political satire on the Prince of Wales Mr Croker, who took the last view, seems to have been substantially right

lofty.—A very great collection of pictures.—Three of Raphael.—Two Holy Family—One small piece of M. Angelo—One room of Rubens—I thought the pictures of Raphael fine.

"The Thuilleries—Statues—Venus—Æn and Anchises in his arms.—Nilus—Many more—The walks not open to mean persons.—Chairs at night hired for two sous a piece—Pont tournant.

"Austin Nuns—Grate.—Mrs Fermor, Abbess¹—She knew Pope, and thought him disagreeable—Mrs ——— has many books,—has seen life—Their frontlet disagreeable—Their hood.—Their life easy—Rise about five, hour and half in chapel.—Dine at ten.—Another hour and half at chapel, half an hour about three, and half an hour more at seven—four hours in chapel—A large garden.—Thirteen pensioners—Teacher complained.

"At the Boulevards saw nothing, yet was glad to be there—Rope-dancing and farce—Egg dance

"N [Note] Near Paris, whether on week days or Sundays, the roads empty

"Oct 17 Tuesday. At the Palais Marchand—I bought

A snuff box,	24 L
—————	6
Table book	15
Scissors 3 p [pair]	18
—————	

$$63=2\ 12\ 6$$

"We heard the lawyers plead—N As many killed at Paris as there are days in the year—*Chambre de question*—Tournelle at the Palais Marchand—An old venerable building

"The Palais Bourbon, belonging to the Prince of Condé Only one small wing shown,—lofty,—splendid,—gold and glass—The battles of the great Condé are painted in one of the rooms. The present Prince a grandseigneur at thirty-nine

"The sight of palaces, and other great buildings, leaves no very distinct images, unless to those who talk of them, and impress them As I entered, my wife was in my mind * she would have been pleased Having now nobody to please, I am little pleased

"N In France there is no middle rank

"So many shops open, that Sunday is little distinguished at Paris—The palaces of Louvre and Thuilleries granted out in lodgings.

* His tender affection for his departed wife, of which there are many evidences in his "Prayers and Meditations," appears very feelingly in this passage.

¹ Niece to the "Belinda" of "The Rape of the Lock"

" In the *Palais de Bourbon*, gilt globes of metal at the fire-place.

" The French beds commended —Much of the marble only paste.

" The Colosseum a mere wooden building, at least much of it

" Oct. 18. Wednesday We went to Fontainebleau, which we found a large mean town, crowded with people —The forest thick with woods, very extensive —Manucci secured us lodgings.—The appearance of the country pleasant —No hills, few streams, only one hedge —I remember no chapels nor crosses on the road.— Pavement still, and rows of trees

" N Nobody but mean people walk in Paris

" Oct. 19 Thursday At court, we saw the apartments; —the King's bed-chamber and council-chamber extremely splendid —Persons of all ranks in the external rooms through which the family passes, —servants and masters —Brunet with us the second time

" The introducer came to us, —civil to me —Presenting —I had scruples —Not necessary —We went and saw the King and Queen at dinner.—We saw the other ladies at dinner—Madame Elizabeth, with the Princess of Guimené —At night we went to a comedy I neither saw nor heard —Drunken women —Mrs. Th. preferred one to the other

" Oct 20 Friday We saw the Queen mount in the forest —Brown habit, rode aside one lady rode aside —The Queen's horse light grey, —martingale —She galloped —We then went to the apartments, and admired them —Then wandered through the palace. —In the passages, stalls and shops —Painting in fresco by a great master, worn out —We saw the King's horses and dogs —The dogs almost all English —Degenerate.

" The horses not much commended —The stables cool, the kennel filthy.

" At night the ladies went to the opera I refused, but should have been welcome.

" The King fed himself with his left hand as we

" Saturday, 21 In the night I got ground —We came home to Paris —I think we did not see the chapel —Tree broken by the wind. —The French chairs made all of boards painted

" N Soldiers at the court of justice —Soldiers not amenable to the magistrates.—Dijon woman "

" Faggots in the palace —Every thing slovenly, except in the chief rooms.—Trees in the roads, some tall, none old, many very young and small.

" Women's saddles seem ill made.—Queen's bridle woven with silver.—Tags to strike the horse.

"Sunday, Oct 22 To Versailles, a mean town—Carriages of business passing—Mean shops against the wall—Our way lay through Seve, where the China manufacture—Wooden bridge at Seve, in the way to Versailles—The palace of great extent—The front long, I saw it not perfectly—The Menagerie Cygnets dark, the black feet, on the ground, tame—Halcyons, or gulls.—Stag and hind, young—Aviary, very large, the net, wire—Black flag of China, small—Rhinoceros, the horn broken and pared away, which, I suppose will grow, the basis, I think, four inches cross; the skin folds like loose cloth doubled over his body, and cross his hips, a very nimble though young, as big, perhaps, as four oxen—The young elephant, with his tusks just appearing—The brown bear put out his paws,—all very tame—The lion—The tigers I did not well view—The camel, or dromedary with two bunches, called the Huguin,* taller than any horse—Two camels with one bunch—Among the birds was a pelican, who being let out, went to a fountain and swam about to catch fish. His feet well webbed he dipped his head and turned his long bill sidewise. He caught two or three fish, but did not eat them.

"Trianon is a kind of reticlit appendant to Versailles. It has an open portico, the pavement, and, I think the pillars of marble—There are many rooms which I do not distinctly remember—A tale of porphyry about five feet long and between two and three broad given to Lewis XIV by the Venetian State—In the council room almost all that was not door or window was I think looking glass—Little Trianon is a small palace like a gentleman's house—The upper floor paved with brick—Little Vienna—The court is ill paved—The rooms at the top are small, fit to sooth the imagination with privacy. In the front of Versailles are small basons of water on the terrace, and other basons I think below them. There are little courts—The great gallery is wainscotted with mirrors, not very large but joined by frames. I suppose the large plates were not yet made—The play house was very large—The chapel I do not remember if we saw—We saw one chapel but I am not certain whether there or at Trianon—The foreign office paved with bricks—The dinner half a Louis each, and I think a Louis over—Money given at Menagerie, three livres, at palace six livres.

"Oct 23 Monday Last night I wrote to Levet—We went to see the looking glasses wrought. They come from Normandy in cast plates, perhaps the third of an inch thick. At Paris they are ground upon a marble table, by rubbing one plate on another with

* This method should be applied to this animal with one bunch

grit between them. The various sands, of which there are said to be five, I could not learn. The handle, by which the upper glass is moved, has the form of a wheel, which may be moved in all directions. The plates are sent up with their surfaces ground, but not polished, and so continue till they are bespoken, lest time should spoil the surface, as we were told. Those that are to be polished, are laid on a table covered with several thick cloths, hard strained, that the resistance may be equal, they are then rubbed with a hand rubber, held down hard by a contrivance which I did not well understand. The powder which is used last seemed to me to be iron dissolved in aqua fortis they called it, as Baretti said, *marc de l'eau forte*, which he thought was dregs. They mentioned vitriol and saltpetre. The cannon ball swam in the quicksilver. To silver them a leaf of beaten tin is laid, and rubbed with quicksilver, to which it unites. Then more quicksilver is poured upon it, which by its mutual [attraction] rises very high. Then a paper is laid at the nearest end of the plate, over which the glass is slid till it lies upon the plate, having driven much of the quicksilver before it. It is then, I think, pressed upon cloths, and then set sloping to drop the superfluous mercury, the slope is daily heightened towards a perpendicular.

"In the way I saw the Grève, the mayor's house, and the Bastile.

"We then went to Sans-terre, a brewer. He brews with about as much malt as Mr Thrale, and sells his beer at the same price, though he pays no duty for malt, and little more than half as much for beer. Beer is sold retail at 6d a bottle. He brews 4,000 barrels a year. There are seventeen brewers in Paris, of whom none is supposed to brew more than he—reckoning them at 3,000 each, they make 51,000 a year—They make their malt, for malting is here no trade.

"The moat of the Bastile is dry.

"Oct 24 Tuesday. We visited the King's library—I saw the *Speculum humanæ Salvationis*, rudely printed, with ink, sometimes pale, sometimes black, part supposed to be with wooden types, and part with pages cut on boards—The Bible, supposed to be older than that of Mentz, in 62. it has no date, it is supposed to have been printed with wooden types—I am in doubt, the print is large and fair, in two folios.—Another book was shown me, supposed to have been printed with wooden types, I think, *Durandi Sanctuarium* in 58. This is inferred from the difference of form, sometimes seen in the same letter, which might be struck with different puncheons.—The regular similitude of most letters proves better that they are

metal.—I saw nothing but the *Speculum* which I had not seen, I think, before.

"Thence to the Sorbonne —The library very large, not in lattices like the King's. *Marbone* and *Durandi*, q. collection 14 vol. *Scriptores de rebus Gallicis*. many folios.—*Histoire Genealogique of France*, 9 vol —*Gallia Christiana*, the first edition, 4to. the last, f 12 vol.—The Prior and Librarian dined [with us]:—I waited on them home — Their garden pretty, with covered walks, but small; yet may hold many students —The Doctors of the Sorbonne are all equal,—choose those who succeed to vacancies.—Profit little.

"Oct 25. Wednesday I went with the Prior to St Cloud, to see Dr Hooke —We walked round the palace, and had some talk. —I dined with our whole company at the Monastery.—In the library, *Beroald*,—*Cymon*,—*Titus*,—from Boccace *Oratio Proverbialis*, to the Virgin, from Petrarch, Falkland to Sandys,—Dryden's Preface to the third vol of *Miscellanies* *

"Oct 26. Thursday We saw the china at Séve, cut, glazed, painted Bellevue, a pleasing house, not great. fine prospect — Meudon, an old palace—Alexander in porphyry. hollow between eyes and nose, thin cheeks —Plato and Aristotle —Noble terrace overlooks the town —St. Cloud —Gallery not very high, nor grand, but pleasing —In the rooms, Michael Angelo, drawn by himself, Sir Thomas More, Des Cartes, Bochart, Naudæus, Mazarine. —Gilded wainscot, so common that it is not minded —Gough and Keene —Hooke came to us at the inn.—A message from Drumgould.

"Oct 27. Friday I staid at home —Gough and Keene, and Mrs S——'s' friend dined with us —This day we began to have a fire.—The weather is growing very cold, and I fear, has a bad effect upon my breath, which has grown much more free and easy in this country.

"Sat Oct 28 I visited the Grand Chartreux built by St Louis. —It is built for forty, but contains only twenty-four, and will not maintain more —The friar that spoke to us had a pretty apartment. —Mr Bajetti says, four rooms, I remember but three —His books seemed to be French —His garden was neat, he gave me grapes. —We saw the Place de Victoire, with the statues of the King, and the captive nations

"We saw the palace and gardens of Luxembourg, but the gallery

* He means, I suppose, that he read these different pieces, while he remained in the library

¹ Strickland

was shut — We climbed to the top stairs. — I dined with Colbrooke, who had much company. — Foote, Sir George Rodney, Motteux, Udson, Taaf — Called on the Prior, and found him in bed.

"Hotel—a guinea a day.—Coach, three guineas a week.—Valet de place, three l. a day.—*Avant-coureur*, a guinea a week — Ordinary dinner, six l. a head — Our ordinary seems to be about five guineas a day.—Our extraordinary expenses, as diversions, gratuities, clothes, I cannot reckon.—Our travelling is ten guineas a day.

"White stockings, 18 l. Wig — Hat.

"Sunday, Oct 29 We saw the boarding-school — The *Enfants trouvés* — A room with about eighty-six children in cradles, as sweet as a parlour — They lose a third, take in to perhaps more than seven [years old], put them to trades, pin to them the papers sent with them — Want nurses.—Saw their chapel.

"Went to St Eustatia, saw an innumerable company of girls catechised, in many bodies, perhaps 100 to a catechist — Boys taught at one time, girls at another — The sermon, the preacher wears a cap, which he takes off at the name — his action uniform, not very violent

"Oct. 30 Monday We saw the library of St Germain — A very noble collection — *Code i Divinorum Officiorum*, 1459. — a letter, square like that of the *Offices*, perhaps the same — The *Codex*, by Fust and Gernsheym — *Meursius*, 12 v fol — *Amadis*, in French, 3 v. fol. — *CATHOLICON sine colophone*, but of 1460 — Two other editions,* one by *Augustin de Civitate Dei*, without name, date, or place, but of Fust's square letter as it seems

"I dined with Col. Drumgould;† had a pleasing afternoon.

"Some of the books of St Germain's stand in presses from the wall, like those at Oxford.

"Oct. 31. Tuesday I lived at the Benedictines, mcagre day; soup mcagre, herrings, eels, both with sauce, fryed fish, lentils, tasteless in themselves. In the library, where I found *Masseus's*

* I have looked in vain into De Bure, Meerman, Mattaire, and other typographical books, for the two editions of the "*Catholicon*," which Dr Johnson mentions here, with names which I cannot make out. I read "one by *Latinus*, one by *Bordinus*." I have deposited the original MS in the British Museum, where the curious may see it. My grateful acknowledgements are due to Mr Planta for the trouble he was pleased to take in aiding my researches

† Drumgould long resided at St Germans, and was a friend of Burke's, to whom he told the interesting fact that

"old Grammont was a very cross, unpleasant, old fellow," though his manners are so agreeable

de Historia Indicâ: Promontorium flectere, to double the Cape. I parted very tendely from the Prior and Friar Wilkes

"*Maitre es Arts*, 2 y—*Bacc. Theol.* 3 y—*Licentiate*, 2 y—*Doctor Th* 2 y in all 9 years—For the doctorate three disputations, *Major, Minor, Sorbonica*—Several colleges suppressed, and transferred to that which was the Jesuit's College.

"Nov 1 Wednesday We left Paris—St Denis a large town; the church not very large, but the middle isle is very lofty and awful—On the left are chapels built beyond the line of the wall, which destroy the symmetry of the sides—The organ is higher above the pavement than any I have ever seen—The gates are of brass—On the middle gate is the history of our Lord—The painted windows are historical, and said to be eminently beautiful—We were at another church belonging to a convent, of which the portal is a dome, we could not enter further, and it was almost dark

"Nov 2 Thursday We came this day to Chantilly, a seat belonging to the Prince of Condé—This place is eminently beautified by all varieties of waters starting up in fountains, falling in cascades, running in streams, and spread in lakes—The water seems to be too near the house—All this water is brought from a source or river three leagues off, by an artificial canal, which for one league is carried under ground—The house is magnificent—The cabinet seems well stocked. what I remember was, the jaws of a hippopotamus, and a young hippopotamus preserved, which, however, is so small that I doubt its reality It seems too hairy for an abortion, and too small for a mature birth—Nothing was in spirits, all was dry—The dog, the deer, the ant-bear with long snout—The toucan, long broad beak—The stables were of very great length—The kennel had no scents—There was a mockery of a village—The Menagerie had few animals—Two faussans,^b or Brazilian weasels, spotted, very wild—There is a forest, and, I think, a park—I walked till I was very weary, and next morning felt my feet battered, and with pains in the toes

"Nov 3 Friday We came to Compiègne,¹ a very large town,

^a The writing is so bad here, that the names of several of the animals could not be deciphered without much more acquaintance with natural history than I possess. Dr Blagden, with his usual politeness, most obligingly examined the MS. To that gentleman, and to Dr Gray, of the British Museum, who also very readily assisted me I beg leave to express my best thanks.

^b It is thus written by Johnson, from the French pronunciation of *Forsane*. It should be observed that the person who showed this Menagerie was mistaken in supposing the *fossane* and the Brazilian weasel to be the same, the *fossane* being a different animal, and a native of Madagascar. I find them, however, upon one plate in Pennant's "Synopsis of Quadrupeds."

^c Second Edition—Line 3 *Maitre des Arts.*

¹ Mrs. Piozz reminds Johnson how he tasted unicorn's y at Compiègne about her

with a royal palace built round a pentagonal court.—The court is raised upon vaults, and has, I suppose an entry on one side by a gentle rise.—Talk of painting —The church is not very large, but very elegant and splendid —I had at first great difficulty to walk, but motion grew continually easier —At night we came to Noyon, an episcopal city —The cathedral is very beautiful, the pillars alternately Gothick and Corinthian —We entered a very noble parochial church —Noyon is walled, and is said to be three miles round.

"Nov. 4 Saturday. We rose very early, and came through St. Quintin to Cambray, not long after three —We went to an English nunnery, to give a letter to Father Welch, the confessor, who came to visit us in the evening.

"Nov 5. Sunday We saw the cathedral.—It is very beautiful, with chapels on each side —The choir splendid —The balustrade in one part brass —The Neff very high and grand —The Altar silver as far as it is seen —The vestments very splendid.—At the Benedictine's church——"

Here his journal "ends abruptly Whether he wrote any more after this time, I know not, but probably not much, as he arrived in England about the 12th of November These short notes of his tour, though they may seem minute taken singly, make together a considerable mass of information, and exhibit such an ardour of enquiry and acuteness of examination, as, I believe, are found in but few travellers, especially at an advanced age They completely refute the idle notion which has been propagated, *that he could not see*, and, if he had taken the trouble to revise and digest them, he undoubtedly could have expanded them into a very entertaining narrative.

When I met him in London the following year, the account which he gave me of his French tour, was, "Sir, I have seen all the visibilities of Paris, and around it, but to have formed an acquaintance with the people there, would have required more time than I could stay. I was just beginning to creep into acquaintance by means of Colonel Drumgould, a very high man, Sir, head of *L'Ecole Militaire*, a most complete character, for he had first been a professor of rhetoric, and then became a soldier. And, Sir, I was very

* My worthy and ingenious friend, Mr Andrew Lumsdane, by his accurate acquaintance with France, enabled me to make out many proper names, which Dr Johnson had written indistinctly, and sometimes spelt erroneously

criticisms on the "contour, grace, and expression" of a picture Baretta adds in his *Marginalia*, "He behaved amiss

at St. Deny's, where he took offence at some little thing, *fort mal à propos*"

kindly treated by the English Benedictines, and have a cell appropriated to me in their convent "

He observed, " The great in France live very magnificently, but the rest very miserably There is no happy middle state as in England The shops of Paris are mean , the meat in the markets is such as would be sent to a gaol in England and Mr. Thrale justly observed, that the cookery of the French was forced upon them by necessity , for they could not eat their meat, unless they added some taste to it The French are an indelicate people , they will spit upon any place At Madame ———'s,¹ a literary lady of rank, the footman took the sugar in his fingers, and threw it into my coffee. I was going to put it aside , but hearing it was made on purpose for me, I even tasted Tom's fingers The same lady would needs make tea *à l'Angloise*. The spout of the tea-pot did not pour freely she bade the footman blow into it. France is worse than Scotland in every thing but climate Nature has done more for the French , but they have done less for themselves than the Scotch have done "

It happened that Foote was at Paris at the same time with Dr. Johnson, and his description of my friend while there was abundantly ludicrous. He told me, that the French were quite astonished at his figure and manner, and at his dress, which he obstinately continued exactly as in London ,—his brown clothes, black stockings, and plain shirt. He mentioned, that an Irish gentleman said to Johnson, " Sir, you have not seen the best French players " JOHNSON " Players, Sir! I look on them as no better than creatures set upon tables and joint-stools to make faces and produce laughter, like dancing dogs "—" But, Sir, you will allow that some players are better than others ? " JOHNSON. " Yes, Sir, as some dogs dance better than others "

While Johnson was in France, he was generally very resolute in speaking Latin It was a maxim with him that a man should not let himself down, by speaking a language which he speaks imperfectly Indeed, we must have often observed how inferior, how

¹ This lady was Madame du Bocage, as Mr. Croker discovered from Miss Reynolds's " Recollections "

² Burdett, always ungracious when not malignant, thus describes his fellow-traveller —

" He mused as much on the road to Paris as he did in his garret in London During our journey to and from Paris he visited five or six libraries, which is a most idle thing a traveller can do, as

they are to be seen cursorily With men, women, and children, he never exchanged a word " And again " He did so constantly when we went to France together, and noticed the country so little that he scarcely spoke of it ever after If he noticed the Hebrides somewhat more, it was because he lay under the necessity of giving an account of it , which was not the case in France, where he never touched a pen "—*Marginalia*

much like a child a man appears, who speaks a broken tongue. When Sir Joshua Reynolds, at one of the dinners of the Royal Academy, presented him to a Frenchman of great distinction, he would not deign to speak French, but talked Latin, though his Excellency did not understand it, owing, perhaps, to Johnson's English pronunciation. yet upon another occasion he was observed to speak French to a Frenchman of high rank, who spoke English; and being asked the reason, with some expression of surprise,—he answered, "Because I think my French is as good as his English." Though Johnson understood French perfectly, he could not speak it readily, as I have observed at his first interview with General Paoli, in 1769, yet he wrote it, I imagine, very well, as appears from some of his letters in Mrs. Piozzi's collection, of which I shall transcribe one

A Madame La Comtesse de ———

"July 16, 1771¹

"Oui, Madame, le moment est arrivé, et il faut que je parte. Mais pourquoi faut il partir? Est ce que je m'ennuye? Je m'ennuierai ailleurs Est ce que je cherche ou quelque plaisir, ou quelque soulagement? Je ne cherche rien, je n'espere rien Aller voir ce que j'ai vu, être un peu rejoué, un peu degouté, ne resouvenir que la vie se passe, et qu'elle se passe en vain, me plaindre de moi, m'endurcir aux dehors, voici le tout de ce qu'on compte pour les delices de l'année Que Dieu vous donne, Madame, tous les agréments de la vie, avec un esprit qui peut en jouir sans s'y lasser trop"

Here let me not forget a curious anecdote, as related to me by Mr Beaucherk, which I shall endeavour to exhibit as well as I can in that gentleman's lively manner; and in justice to him it is

¹ Dated in Mrs Piozzi's letters May 16, 1771, and in Boswell's two editions July 16, 1771. In the later editions it stands July 16, 1775. Mr Croker is therefore in error when he states that all the editions but the first have July 16, 1775. Boswell, when copying, often made mistakes as to months and years. It is evident that the date was changed by Malone, on the idea that the letter was written on the eve of Johnson's departure from France. But this is not consistent with the passage "aller voir ce que j'ai vu". From the tone of the rest of the sentence, it looks as though he were leaving for Lichfield, where he was likely "to see what he had seen

before, be a little amused and a little disgusted."

Mr Boswell is right to qualify his moderate praise of Johnson's French by an "as I imagine." This letter, as well as the one addressed to Miss Fint, is in wretched French, as indeed Barrett testifies (*Marginalia*). "Il faut que je parte," "je m'ennuierai ailleurs," "aller voir ce que j'ai vu," "un peu rejoué," "la vie se passe," "me plaindre de moi," are all barbarous, while "m'endurcir aux dehors" is unintelligible Johnson-French, boldly fashioned for the occasion. In his third edition Boswell's opinion of Johnson's French was changed from "very well" to "pretty well."

proper to add, that Dr Johnson told me, I might rely both on the correctness of his memory, and the fidelity of his narrative. "When Madame de Boufflers was first in England, (said Beauclerk,) she was desirous to see Johnson. I accordingly went with her to his chambers in the Temple, where she was entertained with his conversation for some time. When our visit was over, she and I left him, and were got into Inner Temple-lane, when all at once I heard a noise like thunder. This was occasioned by Johnson, who it seems upon a little recollection, had taken it into his head that he ought to have done the honours of his literary residence to a foreign lady of quality, and eager to shew himself a man of gallantry, was hurrying down the staircase in violent agitation. He overtook us before we reached the Temple gate, and brushing in between me and Madame de Boufflers, seized her hand, and conducted her to her coach. His dress was a rusty brown morning suit, a pair of old shoes by way of slippers, a little shrivelled wig sticking on the top of his head, and the sleeves of his shirt and the knees of his breeches hanging loose. A considerable crowd of people gathered round, and were not a little struck by this singular appearance."

He spoke Latin with wonderful fluency and elegance. When Pere Boscovich was in England, Johnson dined in company with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, and at Dr Douglas's, now Bishop of Carlisle. Upon both occasions that celebrated foreigner expressed his astonishment at Johnson's Latin conversation.

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON

"Edinburgh, Dec 5, 1775

"MY DEAR SIR.—Mr. Alexander Maclean, the present young Laird of Col, being to set out to-morrow for London, I give him this letter to introduce him to your acquaintance. The kindness which you and I experienced from his brother, whose unfortunate death we sincerely lament, will make us always desirous to shew attention to any branch of the family. Indeed, you have so much of the true Highland cordiality, that I am sure you would have thought me to blame if I had neglected to recommend to you this Hebridean prince, in whose island we were hospitably entertained. I ever am with respectful attachment, my dear Sir,

"Your most obliged

"And most humble Servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

Cor. et Ad.—After line 25 read, "When at Paris, Johnson thus characterised Voltaire to Freron the Journalist 'Vir est acenim ingenii, et plurimum literarum'"

Mr Maclean returned with the most agreeable accounts of the polite attention with which he was received by Dr. Johnson.

In the course of this year Dr Burney informs me, that "he very frequently met Dr. Johnson at Mr. Thrale's, at Streatham, where they had many long conversations, often sitting up as long as the fire and candles lasted, and much longer than the patience of the servants subsisted "

A few of Johnson's sayings, which that gentleman recollects, shall here be inserted.

"I never take a nap after dinner but when I have had a bad night, and then the nap takes me "

"The writer of an epitaph should not be considered as saying nothing but what is strictly true Allowance must be made for some degree of exaggerated praise In lapidary inscriptions a man is not upon oath "

"There is now less flogging in our great schools than formerly, but then less is learned there , so that what the boys get at one end, they lose at the other "

"More is learned in publick than in private schools, from emulation, there is the collision of mind with mind, or the radiation of many minds pointing to one center Though few boys make their own exercises, yet if a good exercise is given up, out of a great number of boys, it is made by somebody "

"I hate bye-roads in education Education is as well known, and has long been as well known, as ever it can be Endeavouring to make children prematurely wise is useless labour. Suppose they have more knowledge at five or six years old than other children, what use can be made of it? It will be lost before it is wanted, and the waste of so much time and labour of the teacher can never be repaid Too much is expected from precocity, and too little performed Miss —— was an instance of early cultivation, but in what did it terminate? In marrying a little Presbyterian parson, who keeps an infant boarding-school, so that all her employment now is, 'to suckle fools and chronicle small beer.' She tells the children, 'This is a cat, and that is a dog, with four legs and a tail , see there! you are much better than a cat or a dog, for you can speak ' If I had bestowed such an education on a daughter, and had discovered that she thought of marrying such a fellow, I would have sent her to the Congress "

After having talked slightly of musick, he was observed to listen very attentively while Miss Thrale played on the harpsichord, and with eagerness he called to her, "Why don't you dash away

like Burney?" Dr Burney upon this said to him, "I believe, Sir, we shall make a musician of you at last" Johnson with candid complacency replied, "Sir, I shall be glad to have a new sense given to me"

He had come down one morning to the breakfast room, and been a considerable time by himself before any body appeared When on a subsequent day, he was twitted by Mrs Thrale for being very late, which he generally was, he defended himself by alluding to the extraordinary morning, when he had been too early, "Madam, I do not like to come down to *vacuity*"

Dr Burney having remarked that Mr Garrick was beginning to look old, he said, "Why, Sir, you are not to wonder at that, no man's face has had more wear and tear"

Not having heard from him for a longer time than I supposed he would be silent, I wrote to him December 18, not in good spirits, "Sometimes I have been afraid that the cold which has gone over Europe this year like a sort of pestilence, has seized you severely, sometimes my imagination, which is upon occasions prolific of evil, hath figured that you may have somehow taken offence at some part of my conduct"

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—Never dream of any offence, how should you offend me? I consider your friendship as a possession, which I intend to hold till you take it from me, and to lament if ever by my fault I should lose it However, when such suspicions find their way into your mind, always give them vent, I shall make haste to disperse them, but hinder their first ingress if you can Consider such thoughts as morbid

"Such illness as may excuse my omission to Lord Hailes I cannot honestly plead I have been hindered I know not how, by a succession of petty obstructions I hope to mend immediately, and to send next post to his Lordship Mr Thrale would have written to you if I had omitted, he sends his compliments, and wishes to see you.

"You and your lady will now have no more wrangling about feudal inheritance How does the young Laird of Auchinleck? I suppose Miss Veronica is grown a reader and discourser.

"I have just now got a cough, but it has never yet hindered me from sleeping I have had quieter nights than are common with me.

"I cannot but rejoice that Joseph^a has had the wit to find the

^a Joseph Rutter, a Bohemian, who was in my service many years, and attended Dr Johnson and me in our tour to the Hebrides After having left me for some time, he had now returned to me

way back. He is a fine fellow, and one of the best travellers in the world

"Young Col brought me your letter. He is a very pleasing youth. I took him two days ago to the Mitre, and we dined together. I was as civil as I had the means of being.

"I have had a letter from Rasay, acknowledging, with great appearance of satisfaction, the insertion in the Edinburgh paper. I am very glad that it was done.

"My compliments to Mrs Boswell, who does not love me, and of all the rest, I need only send them to those that do, and I am afraid it will give you very little trouble to distribute them. I am, my dear, dear Sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

"December 23, 1775." ¹

"SAM JOHNSON

In 1776, Johnson wrote, so far as I can discover, nothing for the public but that his mind was still ardent, and fraught with generous wishes to attain to still higher degrees of literary excellence, is proved by his private notes of this year, which I shall insert in their proper place.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—I have at last sent you all Lord Hailes's papers. While I was in France, I looked very often into Henault, but Lord Hailes, in my opinion, leaves him far, and far, behind. Why I did not dispatch so short a perusal sooner, when I look back, I am utterly unable to discover but human moments are stolen away by a thousand petty impediments which leave no trace behind them. I have been afflicted, through the whole Christmas, with the general disorder, of which the worst effect was a cough, which is now much mitigated, though the country, on which I look from a window at Streatham, is now covered with a deep snow. Mrs. Williams is very ill every body else is as usual.

"Among the papers, I found a letter to you, which I think you had not opened, and a paper for 'The Chronicle,' which I suppose it not necessary now to insert. I return them both.

"I have, within these few days, had the honour of receiving Lord Hailes's first volume, for which I return my most respectful thanks.

"I wish you, my dearest friend, and your haughty lady, (for I know she does not love me,) and the young ladies, and the young

¹ Here ends the first volume of Mr Boswell's first quarto edition.

Laird, all happiness Teach the young gentleman, in spite of his
mamma, to think and speak well of, Sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"Jan 10, 1776"

At this time was in agitation a matter of great consequence to me and my family, which I should not obtrude upon the world, were it not that the part which Dr Johnson's friendship for me made him take in it was the occasion of an exertion of his abilities, which it would be injustice to conceal. That what he wrote upon the subject may be understood, it is necessary to give a state of the question, which I shall do as briefly as I can.

In the year 1504, the barony or manour of Auchinleck, (pronounced *Affleck*), in Ayrshire, which belonged to a family of the same name with the lands, having fallen to the Crown by forfeiture, James the Fourth, King of Scotland, granted it to Thomas Boswell, a branch of an ancient family in the county of Fife, styling him in the charter, "*dilecto familiari nostro*," and assigning, as the cause of the grant, "*pro bono et fidei servitio nobis prestito*." Thomas Boswell was slain in battle, fighting along with his Sovereign, at the fatal field of Floddon, in 1513.

From this very honourable founder of our family, the estate was transmitted, in a direct series of heirs male, to David Boswell, my father's great grand uncle, who had no sons, but four daughters, who were all respectably married, the eldest to Lord Cathcart.

David Boswell, being resolute in the military feudal principle of continuing the male succession, passed by his daughters, and settled the estate on his nephew by his next brother, who approved of the deed, and renounced any pretensions which he might possibly have, in preference to his son. But the estate having been burthened with large portions to the daughters, and other debts, it was necessary for the nephew to sell a considerable part of it, and what remained was still much encumbered.

The fugality of the nephew preserved and, in some degree, relieved the estate. His son, my grandfather, an eminent lawyer, not only repurchased a great part of what had been sold, but acquired other lands, and my father, who was one of the Judges of Scotland, and had added considerably to the estate, now signified his inclination to take the privilege allowed by our law,* to secure it to his family in perpetuity by an entail, which, on account of marriage articles, could not be done without my consent.

* Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, 1665, Cap. 22
Second Edition.—Note "the "

In the plan of entailing the estate, I heartily concurred with him, though I was the first to be restrained by it, but we unhappily differed as to the series of heirs which should be established, or in the language of our law, called to the succession. My father had declared a predilection for heirs general, that is, males and females indiscriminately. He was willing, however, that all males descending from his grandfather should be preferred to females; but would not extend that privilege to males deriving their descent from a higher source. I, on the other hand, had a zealous partiality for heirs male, however remote, which I maintained, by arguments which appeared to me to have considerable weight*. And in the particular case of our family, I apprehended that we were under an implied obligation, in honour and good faith, to transmit the estate by the same tenure which we held it, which was as heirs male, excluding nearer females. I therefore, as I thought conscientiously, objected to my father's scheme.

My opposition was very displeasing to my father, who was entitled to great respect and deference, and I had reason to apprehend disagreeable consequences from my non-compliance with his wishes. After much perplexity and uneasiness, I wrote to Dr Johnson, stating the case, with all its difficulties, at full length, and earnestly requesting that he would consider it at leisure, and favour me with his friendly opinion and advice.

* As first, the opinion of some distinguished naturalists, that our species is transmitted through males only, the female being all along no more than a *nidus*, or nurse, as Mother Earth is to plants of every sort, which notion seems to be confirmed by that text of scripture, "He was yet *in the loins of his FATHER* when Melchisedeck met him" (Heb vi 10) and consequently, that a man's grandson by a daughter, instead of being his *surest* descendant, as is vulgarly said, has, in reality, no connection whatever with his blood.—And secondly, independent of this theory, (which, if true should completely exclude heirs general,) that the preference of a male to a female, without regard to primogeniture, (as a son, though much younger, nay, even a grandson by a son, to a daughter,) be once admitted as it universally is, it must be equally reasonable and proper in the most remote degree of descent from an original proprietor of an estate, as in the nearest, because,—however distant from the representative at the time,—that remote heir male upon the failure of those nearer to the *original proprietor* than he is, becomes in fact the nearest male to *him*, and is, therefore, preferable as *his* representative, to a female descendant.—A little extension of mind will enable us easily to perceive that a son's son, in continuation to whatever length of time, is preferable to a son's daughter, in the succession to an ancient inheritance, in which regard should be had to the representation of the original proprietor, and not to that of one of his descendants.

I am aware of Blackstone's admissible demonstration of the reasonableness of the legal succession, upon the principle of there being the greatest probability that the nearest heir of the person who last dies proprietor of an estate, is of the blood of the first purchaser. But supposing a pedigree to be carefully authenticated through all its branches, instead of mere *probability* there will be a *certainly* that *the nearest heir male, at whatever period*, has the same right of blood with the first heir male, namely, *the original purchaser's eldest son*.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—I was much impressed by your letter, and, if I can form upon your case any resolution satisfactory to myself, will very gladly impart it, but whether I am quite equal to it, I do not know. It is a case compounded of law and justice, and requires a mind versed in juridical disquisitions. Could you not tell your whole mind to Lord Hailes? He is, you know, both a Christian and a Lawyer. I suppose he is above partiality, and above loquacity, and, I believe, he will not think the time lost in which he may quiet a disturbed, or settle a wavering mind. Write to me, as any thing occurs to you, and if I find myself stopped by want of facts necessary to be known, I will make enquiries of you as my doubts arise.

"If your former resolutions should be found only fanciful, you decide rightly in judging that your father's fancies may claim the preference, but whether they are fanciful or rational, is the question. I really think Lord Hailes could help us.

"Make my compliments to dear Mrs Boswell, and tell her, that I hope to be wanting in nothing that I can contribute, to bring you all out of your troubles. I am dear Sir, most affectionately,

"Your humble servant

"SAM JOHNSON

"London Jan 15, 1776 "

To the same.

"DEAR SIR,—I am going to write upon a question which requires more knowledge of local law, and more acquaintance with the general rules of inheritance, than I can claim; but I write, because you request it.

"Land is, like any other possession, by natural right wholly in the power of its present owner, and may be sold, given, or bequeathed, absolutely or conditionally, as judgement shall direct, or passion incite.

"But natural right would avail little without the protection of law, and the primary notion of law is restraint in the exercise of natural right. A man is therefore, in society, not fully master of what he calls his own, but he still retains all the power which law does not take from him.

"In the exercise of the right which law either leaves or gives, regard is to be paid to moral obligations.

"Of the estate which we are now considering, your father still retains such possession, with such power over it, that he can sell it,

and do with the money what he will, without any legal impediment. But when he extends his power beyond his own life, by settling the order of succession, the law makes your consent necessary

"Let us suppose that he sells the land to risk the money in some specious adventure, and in that adventure loses the whole his posterity would be disappointed, but they could not think themselves injured or robbed. If he spent it upon vice or pleasure, his successors could only call him vicious and voluptuous, they could not say that he was injurious or unjust

"He that may do more, may do less. He that, by selling, or squandering, may disinherit a whole family, may certainly disinherit part by a partial settlement

"Laws are formed by the manners and exigencies of particular times, and it is but accidental that they last longer than their causes. the limitation of feudal succession to the male arose from the obligation of the tenant to attend his chief in war

"As times and opinions are always changing, I know not whether it be not usurpation to prescribe rules to posterity, by presuming to judge of what we cannot know, and I know not whether I fully approve either your design or your father's, to limit that succession which descended to you unlimited. If we are to leave *salutem* *tectum* to posterity, what we have without any merit of our own received from our ancestors, should not choice and free will be kept unviolated? Is land to be treated with more reverence than liberty?—If this consideration should restrain your father from disinheriting some of the males, does it leave you the power of disinheriting all the females?

"Can the possessor of a feudal estate make any will? Can he appoint out of the inheritance, any portions to his daughters? There seems to be a very shadowy difference between the power of leaving land and of leaving money to be raised from land. between leaving an estate to females, and leaving the male heir in effect, only their steward

"Suppose at one time a law that allowed only males to inherit, and during the continuance of this law many estates to have descended, passing by the females to remoter heirs. Suppose afterwards the law repealed in correspondence with a change of manners, and women made capable of inheritance, would not then the tenure of estates be changed? Could the women have no benefit from a law made in their favour? Must they be passed by upon moral principles for ever, because they were once excluded by a legal prohibition? Or may that which passed only to males by one law, pass likewise to females by another?

"You mention your resolution to maintain the right of your brothers * I do not see how any of their rights are invaded.

"As your whole difficulty arises from the act of your ancestor, who diverted the succession from the females, you enquire, very properly, what were his motives, and what was his intention, for you certainly are not bound by his act more than he intended to bind you, nor hold your land on harder or stricter terms than those on which it was granted

"Intentions must be gathered from acts When he left the estate to his nephew, by excluding his daughters, was it, or was it not, in his power to have perpetuated the succession to the males? If he could have done it, he seems to have shewn, by omitting it, that he did not desire it to be done, and, upon your own principles, you will not easily prove your right to destroy that capacity of succession which your ancestors have left

"If your ancestor had not the power of making a perpetual settlement, and if, therefore, we cannot judge distinctly of his intentions, yet his act can only be considered as an example, it makes not an obligation And, as you observe, he set no example of rigorous adherence to the line of succession He that overlooked a brother, would not wonder that little regard is shewn to remote relations

"As the rules of succession are, in a great part, purely legal, no man can be supposed to bequeath any thing, but upon legal terms. he can grant no power which the law denies, and if he makes no special and definite limitation, he confers all the powers which the law allows

"Your ancestor, for some reason, disinherited his daughters; but it no more follows that he intended his act as a rule for posterity, than the disinheriting of his brother

"If therefore, you ask by what right your father admits daughters to inheritance, ask yourself, first, by what right you require them to be excluded?

"It appears, upon reflection, that your father excludes nobody; he only admits nearer females to inherit before males more remote, and the exclusion is purely consequential

"These, dear Sir, are my thoughts, immethodical and deliberative, but, perhaps, you may find in them some glimmering of evidence.

"I cannot, however, but again recommend to you a conference

* Which term I applied to all the heirs male
Cor et Ad—Line 29 Read "this"

with Lord Hailes, whom you know to be both a Lawyer and a Christian

"Make my compliments to Mrs Boswell, though she does not love me. I am, Sir,

"Your affectionate servant,

"Feb 3, 1773"

"SAM. JOHNSON.

I had followed his recommendation and consulted Lord Hailes, who upon this subject had a firm opinion contrary to mine. His Lordship obligingly took the trouble to write me a letter, in which he discussed with legal and historical learning, the points in which I saw much difficulty, maintaining that "the succession of heirs general was the succession, by the law of Scotland, from the throne to the cottage, as far as we can learn it by record," observing that the estate of our family had not been limited to heirs male, and that though an heir male had in one instance been chosen in preference to nearer females, that had been an arbitrary act, which had seemed to be best in the embarrassed state of affairs at that time, and the fact was, that upon a fair computation of the value of land and money at the time, applied to the estate and the burthens upon it, there was nothing given to the heir male but the skeleton of an estate. "The plea of conscience (said his Lordship) which you put, is a most respectable one, especially when *conscience* and *self* are on different sides. But I think that conscience is not well informed, and that *self* and *she* ought on this occasion to be of a side"

This letter, which had considerable influence upon my mind, I sent to Dr Johnson, begging to hear from him again, upon this interesting question.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq

"DEAR SIR,—Having not any acquaintance with the laws or customs of Scotland, I endeavoured to consider your question upon general principles, and found nothing of much validity that I could oppose to this position 'He who inherits a fief unlimited by his ancestor, inherits the power of limiting it according to his own judgement or opinion' If this be true, you may join with your father.

"Further consideration produced another conclusion, 'He who receives a fief unlimited by his ancestors, gives his heirs some reason to complain if he does not transmit it unlimited to posterity.' For why should he make the state of others worse than his own, without a reason? If this be true, though neither you nor your father are about to do what is quite right, but as your father violates (I think) the legal succession least, he seems to be nearer the right than yourself.

"It cannot but occur that 'Women have natural and equitable claims as well as men, and these claims are not to be capriciously or lightly superseded or infringed.' When fiefs implied military service, it is easily discerned why females could not inherit them, but that reason is now at an end. As manners make laws, manners likewise repeal them

"These are the general conclusions which I have attained. None of them are very favourable to your scheme of entail, nor perhaps to any scheme. My observation, that only he who acquires an estate may bequeath it capriciously,* if it contains any conviction includes this position likewise, that only he who acquires an estate may entail it capriciously. But I think it may be safely presumed, that 'he who inherits an estate inherits all the power legally concomitant' And that 'He who gives or leaves unlimited an estate legally limitable, must be presumed to give that power of limitation which he omitted to take away, and to commit future contingencies to future prudence' In these two positions I believe Lord Hailes will advise you to rest, every other notion of possession seems to me full of difficulties, and embarrassed with scruples

"If these axioms be allowed, you have arrived now at full liberty without the help of particular circumstances, which, however, have in your case great weight. You very rightly observe, that he who passing by his brother gave the inheritance to his nephew, could limit no more than he gave, and by Lord Hailes's estimate of fourteen years' purchase, what he gave was no more than you may easily entail according to your own opinion, if that opinion should finally prevail.

"Lord Hailes's suspicion that entails are encroachments on the dominion of Providence, may be extended to all hereditary privileges and all permanent institutions, I do not see why it may not be extended to any provision but for the present hour, since all care about futurity proceeds upon a supposition, that we know at least in some degree what will be future. Of the future we certainly know nothing; but we may form conjectures from the past, and the power of forming conjectures, includes, in my opinion, the duty of acting in conformity to that probability which we discover. Providence gives the power of which reason teaches the use. I am, dear Sir,

"Your most faithful servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON

"February 9, 1776

* I had reminded him of his observation mentioned in Vol. I page 489.

"I hope I shall get some ground now with Mrs. Boswell, make my compliments to her, and to the little people

"Don't burn papers, they may be safe enough in your own box, —you will wish to see them hereafter"

To the same.

"DEAR SIR,—To the letters which I have written about your great question I have nothing to add. If your conscience is satisfied, you have now only your prudence to consult. I long for a letter, that I may know how this troublesome and vexatious question is at last decided.* I hope that it will at last end well. Lord Hailes's letter was very friendly, and very seasonable, but I think his aversion from entails has something in it like superstition. Providence is not counteracted by any means which Providence puts into our power. The continuance and propagation of families makes a great part of the Jewish law, and is by no means prohibited in the Christian institution, though the necessity of it continues no longer. Hereditary tenures are established in all civilised countries, and are accompanied in most with hereditary authority. Sir William Temple considers our constitution as defective, that there is not an unalienable estate in land connected with a peerage and Lord Bacon mentions as a proof that the Turks are Barbarians, their want of *Stirpes*, as he calls them, or hereditary rank. Do not let your mind, when it is freed from the supposed necessity of a rigorous entail, be entangled with contrary objections, and think all entails unlawful, till you have cogent arguments, which I believe you will never find, I am afraid of scruples

"I have now sent all Lord Hailes's papers, part I found hidden in a drawer in which I had laid them for security, and had forgotten them. Part of these are written twice, I have returned both the copies. Part I had read before

"Be so kind as to return Lord Hailes my most respectful thanks for his first volume, his accuracy strikes me with wonder, his narrative is far superiour to that of Henault, as I have formerly mentioned.

* *The entail framed by my father with various judicious clauses, was executed by him and me, settling the estate upon the heirs male of his grandfather, which I found had been already done by my grandfather, imperfectly, but so as to be defeated only by seiling the lands. I was freed by Dr Johnson from scruples of conscientious obligation, and could, therefore, gratify my father. But my opinion and partiality for male succession, in its full extent, remained unshaken. Yet let me not be thought harsh or unkind to daughters, for my notion is, that they should be treated with great affection and tenderness, and always participate of the prosperity of the family.*

"I am afraid that the trouble, which my irregularity and delay has cost him, is greater, far greater, than any good that I can do him will ever recompense, but if I have any more copy, I will try to do better.

"Pray let me know if Mrs. Boswell is friends with me, and pay my respects to Veronica, and Euphemia, and Alexander. I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"Feb 15, 1775"¹

"SAM JOHNSON.

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

"Edinburgh, Feb 20, 1776

* * * * *

"You have illuminated my mind and relieved me from imaginary shackles of conscientious obligation. Were it necessary, I could immediately join in an entail upon the series of heirs approved by my father, but it is better not to act too suddenly."

Dr JOHNSON to Mr BOSWELL

"DEAR SIR,—I am glad that what I could think or say has at all contributed to quiet your thoughts. Your resolution not to act, till your opinion is confirmed by more deliberation, is very just. If you have been scrupulous, do not now be rash. I hope that as you think more, and take opportunities of talking with men intelligent in questions of property, you will be able to free yourself from every difficulty.

"When I wrote last, I sent, I think, ten packets. Did you receive them all?"

"You must tell Mrs. Boswell that I suspected her to have written without your knowledge," and therefore did not return any answer, lest a clandestine correspondence should have been perniciously discovered. I will write to her soon. I am, dear Sir,

"Most affectionately yours,

"Feb 24, 1776."

"SAM JOHNSON.

Having communicated to Lord Hailes what Dr Johnson wrote concerning the question which perplexed me so much, his Lordship wrote to me, "Your scruples have produced more fruit than I ever expected from them, an excellent dissertation on general principles of morals and law."

¹ A letter to him on the interesting subject of the family settlement, which I had read.

¹ Mistake for 1776.

I wrote to Dr Johnson on the 20th of February, complaining of melancholy, and expressing a strong desire to be with him, informing him that the ten packets came all safe; that Lord Hailes was much obliged to him, and said he had almost wholly removed his scruples against entails.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—I have not had your letter half an hour; as you lay so much weight upon my notions, I should think it not just to delay my answer.

"I am very sorry that your melancholy should return, and should be sorry likewise if it could have no relief but from my company. My counsel you may have when you are pleased to require it, but of my company you cannot in the next month have much, for Mr Thrale will take me to Italy, he says, on the first of April.

"Let me warn you very earnestly against scruples. I am glad that you are reconciled to your settlement, and think it a great honour to have shaken Lord Hailes's opinion of entails. Do not, however, hope wholly to reason away your troubles, do not feed them with attention, and they will die imperceptibly away. Fix your thoughts upon your business, fill your intervals with company, and sunshine will again break in upon your mind. If you will come to me, you must come very quickly, and even then I know not but we may scour the country together, for I have a mind to see Oxford and Lichfield before I set out on this long journey. To this I can only add, that I am, dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"March 5, 1776."

To the same.

"DEAR SIR,—Very early in April we leave England, and in the beginning of the next week I shall leave London for a short time, of this I think it necessary to inform you, that you may not be disappointed in any of your enterprises. I had not fully resolved to go into the country before this day.

"Please to make my compliments to Lord Hailes, and men very particularly to Mrs. Boswell my hope that she is reconciled Sir,

"Your faithful servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"March 12, 1776."

Above thirty years ago, the heirs of Lord Chancellor Clarendon
VOL. II.

presented the University of Oxford with the continuation of his History, and such other of his Lordship's manuscripts as had not been published, on condition that the profits arising from their publication should be applied to the establishment of a *Manege* in the University. The gift was accepted in full convocation. A person being now recommended to Dr Johnson, as fit to superintend this proposed riding school, he exerted himself with that zeal for which he was remarkable upon every similar occasion. But, on enquiry into the matter, he found that the scheme was not likely to be soon carried into execution, the profits arising from the Clarendon press being, from some mismanagement, very scanty. This having been explained to him by a respectable dignitary of the church, who had good means of knowing it, he wrote a letter upon the subject, which at once exhibits his extraordinary precision and acuteness, and his warm attachment to his ALMA MATER.

To the Reverend Dr WETHIFRELL, Master of University College,
Oxford. 1234691

"DEAR SIR,—Few things are more unpleasant than the transaction of business with men who are above knowing or caring what they have to do, such as the trustees for Lord Cornbury's institution will, perhaps, appear, when you have read Dr *****'s letter.

"The last part of the Doctor's letter is of great importance. 'The complaint' which he makes I have heard long ago, and did not know but it was redressed. It is unhappy that a practice so erroneous has not yet been altered, for altered it must be, or our press will be useless with all its privileges. The booksellers, who, like all other men, have strong prejudices in their own favour, are enough inclined to think the practice of printing and selling books by any but themselves, an encroachment on the rights of their fraternity, and have need of stronger inducements to circulate academical publications than those of one another, for, of that mutual co-operation by which the general trade is carried on, the University can bear no part. Of those whom I neither love nor fear, and from whom he expects no reciprocation of good offices, why should any man promote the interest but for profit? I suppose, with all our scholastick ignorance of mankind, we are still too knowing to expect that the booksellers will erect themselves into patrons, and buy and sell under the influence of a disinterested zeal for the promotion of learning.

* I suppose the complaint was that the trustees of the Oxford press did not allow the London booksellers a sufficient profit upon vending their publications.

"To the booksellers, if we look for either honour or profit from our press, not only their common profit, but something more must be allowed, and if books, printed at Oxford, are expected to be rated at a high price, that price must be levied on the publick, and paid by the ultimate purchaser, not by the intermediate agents. What price shall be set upon the book, is, to the booksellers, wholly indifferent, provided that they gain a proportionate profit by negotiating the sale.

"Why books printed at Oxford should be particularly dear, I am, however, unable to find. We pay no rent, we inherit many of our instruments and materials, lodging and victuals are cheaper than at London, and, therefore, workmanship ought, at least, not to be dearer. Our expenses are naturally less than those of booksellers; and, in most cases, communities are content with less profit than individuals.

"It is, perhaps, not considered through how many hands a book often passes, before it comes into those of the reader, or what part of the profit each hand must retain, as a motive for transmitting it to the next.

"We will call our primary agent in London, Mr Cadell, who receives our books from us, gives them room in his warehouse, and issues them on demand, by him they are sold to Mr Dilly, a wholesale bookseller, who sends them into the country, and the last seller is the country bookseller. Here are three profits to be paid between the printer and the reader, or in the style of commerce, between the manufacturer and the consumer, and if any of these profits is too penuriously distributed, the process of commerce is interrupted.

"We are now come to the practical question, what is to be done? You will tell me, with reason, that I have said nothing, till I declare how much, according to my opinion, of the ultimate price ought to be distributed through the whole succession of sale.

"The deduction, I am afraid, will appear very great but let it be considered before it is refused. We must allow, for profit, between thirty and thirty-five *per cent* between six and seven shillings in the pound, that is, for every book which costs the last buyer twenty shillings, we must charge Mr Cadell with something less than fourteen. We must set the copies at fourteen shillings each, and superadd what is called the quarterly-book, or for every hundred books so charged we must deliver an hundred and four.

"The profits will then stand thus.

"Mr Cadell, who runs no hazard, and gives no credit, will be paid for warehouse room and attendance by a shilling profit on each book, and his chance of the quarterly-book.

"Mr. Dilly, who buys the book for fifteen shillings, and who will expect the quarterly book if he takes five and twenty, will sell it to his country customer at sixteen and six-pence, by which, at the hazard of loss, and the certainty of long credit, he gains the regular profit of ten *per cent.* which is expected in the wholesale trade

"The country bookseller, buying at sixteen and six-pence, and commonly trusting a considerable time, gains but three and six pence, and, if he trusts a year, not much more than two and six pence, otherwise than as he may, perhaps, take as long credit as he gives

"With less profit than this, and more you see he cannot have, the country bookseller cannot live, for his receipts are small, and his debts sometimes bad

"Thus, dear Sir, I have been incited by Dr * * *'s letter to give you a detail of the circulation of books, which, perhaps, every man has not had opportunity of knowing, and which those who know it, do not, perhaps, always distinctly consider

"I am, &c

"SAM JOHNSON *

"March 12, 1776 "

Having arrived in London late on Friday, the 15th of March, I hastened next morning to wait on Dr Johnson, at his house, but found he was removed from Johnson's court, No 7, to Bolt court No 8,¹ still keeping to his favourite Fleet street My reflection at the time upon this change as marked in my Journal, is, as follows, "I felt a foolish regret that he had left a court which bore his name, but it was not foolish to be affected with some tenderness of regard for a place in which I had seen him a great deal, from whence I had often issued a better and a happier man than when I went in, and which had often appeared to my imagination while I trod its pavement, in the solemn darkness of the night, to be sacred to wisdom, and piety." Being informed that he was at Mr Thrale's, in the

* I am happy in giving this full and clear statement to the publick, to vindicate the authenticity of the greatest author of his age, that respectable body of men, the Bookellers of London from vulgar reflections, as if their profits were exorbitant, when, in truth, Dr Johnson has here allowed them more than they usually demand

Cor et Ad—Line 26 On "name" put the following note.—"He said, when he was in Scotland, that he was Johnson of *that ilk* "

¹ The house was burnt down in 1819, a door scribe that had been distorted out of shape by the fire long lay about the yard. Allen, the printer, lived next door and after the doctor's death the two houses

were taken by Bensley, the printer. Johnson's house was a gloomy but comfortable old mansion with a large drawing room handsomely furnished, and a garden behind

Borough, I hastened thither, and found Mrs Thrale and him at breakfast. I was kindly welcomed. In a moment he was in a full glow of conversation, and I felt myself elevated as if brought into another state of being. Mrs Thrale and I looked to each other while he talked, and our looks expressed our congenial admiration and affection for him. I shall ever recollect this scene with great pleasure. I exclaimed to her, "I am now, intellectually, *Hermippus redivivus*, I am quite restored by him, by transfusion of *mind*." "There are many (she replied) who admire and respect Mr Johnson, but you and I love him."

He seemed very happy in the near prospect of going to Italy with Mr. and Mrs Thrale. "But (said he,) before leaving England I am to take a jaunt to Oxford, Birmingham, my native city Lichfield, and my old friend, Dr Taylor's, at Ashbourne, in Derbyshire. I shall go in a few days, and you, Boswell, shall go with me." I was ready to accompany him, being willing even to leave London to have the pleasure of his conversation.

I mentioned with much regret the extravagance of the representative of a great family of Scotland, by which there was danger of its being ruined, and as Johnson respected it for its antiquity, he joined with me in thinking it would be happy if this person should die. Mrs Thrale seemed shocked at this, as feudal barbarity, and said, "I do not understand this preference of the estate to its owner, of the land to the man who walks upon that land." JOHNSON "Nay, Madam, it is not a preference of the land to its owner, it is the preference of a family to an individual. Here is an establishment in a country, which is of importance for ages not only to the chief but to his people, an establishment which extends upwards and downwards, that this should be destroyed by one idle fellow is a sad thing."

He said "Entails are good, because it is good to preserve in a country, serieses of men, to whom the people are accustomed to look up as to their leaders. But I am for leaving a quantity of land in commerce, to excite industry and keep money in the country; for if no land were to be bought in a country, there would be no encouragement to acquire wealth, because a family could not be founded there; or if it were acquired, it must be carried away to another country where land may be bought. And although the land in every country will remain the same, and be as fertile where there is no money, as where there is, yet all that portion of the happiness of civil life, which is produced by money circulating in a country, would be lost." BOSWELL "Then, Sir, would it be for the advantage of a country that all its lands were sold at once?"

JOHNSON "So far, Sir, as money produces good it would be an advantage, for, then that country would have as much money circulating in it as it is worth. But to be sure this would be counterbalanced by disadvantages attending a total change of proprietors."

I expressed my opinion that the power of entailing should be limited thus: "That there should be one third, or perhaps one half of the land of a country kept free for commerce, that the proportion allowed to be entailed, should be parcelled out so as that no family could entail above a certain quantity. Let a family according to the abilities of its representatives, be richer or poorer in different generations or always rich if its representatives be always wise but let its absolute permanency be moderate. In this way we should be certain of there being always a number of established roots, and as in the course of nature, there is in every age an extinction of some families, there would be continual openings for men ambitious of perpetuity, to plant a stock in the entail ground."

JOHNSON "Why, Sir, mankind will be better able to regulate the system of entails, when the evil of too much land being locked up by them is felt, than we can do at present when it is not felt."

I mentioned Dr Adam Smith's book on "The Wealth of Nations," which was just published, and that Sir John Pringle had observed to me, that Dr Smith who had never been in trade, could not be expected to write well on that subject any more than a lawyer upon physics. JOHNSON "He is mistaken, Sir, a man who has never been engaged in trade himself may undoubtedly write well upon trade and there is nothing which requires more to be illustrated by philosophy than trade does. As to mere wealth, that is to say, money, it is clear that one man or one individual cannot increase its store but by making another poor: but trade procures what is more valuable, the reciprocation of the peculiar advantages of different countries. A merchant seldom thinks but of his own particular trade. To write a good book upon it, a man must have extensive views. It is not necessary to have practised, to write well upon a subject." I mentioned law as a subject on which no man could write well without practice. JOHNSON "Why,

* The privilege of perpetuating in a family an estate and arms *undoubtedly* from generation to generation, is enjoyed by none of his Majesty's subjects except in Scotland, where the legal fiction of *a fine and recovery* is unknown. It is a privilege so proud, that I should think it would be proper to have the exercise of it dependent on the royal prerogative. It seems absurd to permit the power of perpetuating their representation, to men, who having had no eminent merit, have truly no name. The King as the impartial father of his people, would never refuse to grant the privilege to those who deserved it.

Sir, in England, where so much money is to be got by the practice of the law, most of our writers upon it have been in practice, though Blackstone had not been much in practice when he published his 'Commentaries.' But upon the Continent, the great writers on law have not all been in practice. Grotius, indeed, was, but Puffendorf was not, Burlamaqui was not "

When we had talked of the great consequence which a man acquired by being employed in his profession, I suggested a doubt of the justice of the general opinion, that it is improper in a lawyer to solicit employment, for why, I urged, should it not be equally allowable to solicit that as the means of consequence, as it is to solicit votes to be elected a member of parliament? Mr Strahan had told me, that a countryman of his and mine,¹ who had risen to eminence in the law, had, when first making his way, solicited him to get him employed in city causes. JOHNSON "Sir, it is wrong to stir up law-suits, but when once it is certain that a law-suit is to go on, there is nothing wrong in a lawyer's endeavouring that he shall have the benefit, rather than another." BOSWELL "You would not solicit employment, Sir, if you were a lawyer." JOHNSON. "No, Sir, but not because I should think it wrong, but because I should disdain it." This was a good distinction, which will be felt by men of just pride. He proceeded "However, I would not have a lawyer to be wanting to himself in using fair means. I would have him to inject a little hint now and then, to prevent his being overlooked."

Lord Mountstuart's bill for a Scotch militia, in supporting which his Lordship had made an able speech in the House of Commons, was now a pretty general topic of conversation.—JOHNSON "As Scotland contributes so little land-tax towards the general support of the nation, it ought not to have a militia paid out of the general fund, unless it should be thought for the general interest, that Scotland should be protected from an invasion, which no man can think will happen, for what enemy would invade Scotland, where there is nothing to be got? No, Sir, now that the Scotch have not the pay of English soldiers spent among them, as so many troops are sent abroad, they are trying to get money another way by having a militia paid. If they are afraid, and seriously desire to have an armed force to defend them, they should pay for it. Your scheme is to retain a part of your little land-tax, by making us pay and clothe your militia." BOSWELL "You should not talk of *we* and *you*, Sir, there is now an *Union*." JOHNSON. "There must be

¹ Probably Wedderburne

a distinction of interest, while the proportions of land-tax are so unequal. If Yorkshire should say, 'Instead of paying our land-tax, we will keep a greater number of militia,' it would be unreasonable." In this argument my friend was certainly in the wrong. The land-tax is as unequally proportioned between different parts of England, as between England and Scotland, nay, it is considerably unequal in Scotland itself. But the land-tax is but a small part of the numerous branches of publick revenue, all of which Scotland pays precisely as England does. A French invasion made in Scotland would soon penetrate into England.

He thus discoursed upon supposed obligations in settling estates—"Where a man gets the unlimited property of an estate, there is no obligation upon him in *justice* to leave it to one person rather than to another. There is a motive of preference from *kindness*, and this kindness is generally entertained for the nearest relation. If I *owe* a particular man a sum of money, I am obliged to let that man have the next money I get, and cannot in justice let another have it. but if I owe money to no man, I may dispose of what I get as I please. There is not a *debitum justitiæ* to a man's next heir, there is only a *debitum caritatis*. It is plain, then, that I have morally a choice, according to my liking. If I have a brother in want, he has a claim from affection to my assistance: but if I have also a brother in want, whom I like better, he has a preferable claim. The right of an heir at law is only this, that he is to have the succession to an estate, in case no other person is appointed to it by the owner. His right is merely preferable to that of the King."

We got into a boat to cross over to Black-friars, and as we moved along the Thames, I talked to him of a little volume, which, altogether unknown to him, was advertised to be published in a few days, under the title of "*Johnsoniana, or Bon Mots of Dr Johnson*." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is a mighty impudent thing." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, could you have no redress if you were to prosecute a publisher for bringing out, under your name, what you never said, and ascribing to you dull stupid nonsense, or making you swear profanely, as many ignorant relaters of your *bon mots* do?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir, there will always be some truth mixed with the falsehood, and how can it be ascertained how much is true and how much is false? Besides, Sir, what damages would a jury give me for having been represented as swearing?" BOSWELL. "I think, Sir, you should at least disavow such a publication, because the world and posterity might with much plausible foundation say, 'Here is a volume which was publicly advertised and came out in

Dr. Johnson's own time, and, by his silence, was admitted by him to be genuine." JOHNSON. "I shall give myself no trouble about the matter."

He was, perhaps, above suffering from such spurious publications, but I could not help thinking, that many men would be much injured in their reputation, by having absurd and vicious sayings imputed to them, and that redress ought in such cases to be given.

He said, "The value of every story depends on its being true. A story is a picture either of an individual or of human nature in general: if it be false, it is a picture of nothing. For instance: suppose a man should tell that Johnson, before setting out for Italy, as he had to cross the Alps, sat down to make himself wings. This many people would believe, but it would be a picture of nothing. *** (naming a worthy friend of ours,)¹ used to think a story, a story, till I shewed him that truth was essential to it." I observed, that Foote entertained us with stories which were not true, but that, indeed, it was properly not as narratives that Foote's stories pleased us, but as collections of ludicrous images. JOHNSON. "Foote is quite impartial, for he tells lies of every body."

The importance of strict and scrupulous veracity cannot be too often inculcated. Johnson was known to be so rigidly attentive to it, that even in his common conversation the slightest circumstance was mentioned with exact precision. The knowledge of his having such a principle and habit made his friends have a perfect reliance on the truth of every thing that he told, however it might have been doubted if told by many others. As an instance of this, I may mention an odd incident which he related as having happened to him one night in Fleet-street. "A gentlewoman (said he) begged I would give her my arm to assist her in crossing the street, which I accordingly did, upon which she offered me a shilling, supposing me to be the watchman. I perceived that she was somewhat in liquor." This, if told by most people, would have been thought an invention. when told by Johnson, it was believed by his friends as much as if they had seen what passed.

We landed at the Temple-stairs, where we parted.

I found him in the evening in Mrs Williams's room. We talked of religious orders. He said, "It is as unreasonable for a man to go into a Carthusian convent, for fear of being immoral, as for a man to cut off his hands for fear he should steal. There is, indeed,

¹ The term "worthy friend," as well as the number of asterisks, Mr Croker justly remarks, point to Langton.

great resolution in the immediate act of dismembering himself, but when that is once done, he has no longer any merit for though it is out of his power to steal, yet he may all his life be a thief in his heart. So when a man has once become a Carthusian, he is obliged to continue so, whether he chooses it or not. Their silence, too, is absurd. We read in the gospel of the apostles being sent to preach, but not to hold their tongues. All severity that does not tend to increase good, or prevent evil, is idle. I said to the Lady Abbes of a convent, 'Madam, you are here, not for the love of virtue, but the fear of vice.' She said, 'She should remember this as long as she lived.' I thought it hard to give her this view of her situation, when she could not help it, and, indeed, I wondered at the whole of what he now said, because, both in his "Rambler" and "Idler," he treats religious austerities with much solemnity of respect.

Finding him still persevering in his abstinence from wine, I ventured to speak to him of it—JOHNSON. Sir, I have no objection to a man's drinking wine, if he can do it in moderation. I found myself apt to go to excess in it, and the doctor after having been for some time without it, on account of illness, I thought it better not to return to it. Every man is to judge for himself, according to the effects which he experiences. One of the fathers tells us, he found fasting made him so peevish that he did not practise it.

Though he often enlarged upon the evil of intoxication, he was by no means harsh and unforgiving to those who indulged in occasional excess in wine. One of his friends, I well remember, came to sup at a tavern with him and some other gentlemen, and too plainly discovered that he had drunk too much at dinner.¹ When one who loved mischief thinking to produce a severe censure, asked Johnson, some days afterwards, "Well, Sir, what did your friend say to you as an apology for being in such a situation?" Johnson answered, "Sir, he said all that a man *should* say—he said he was sorry for it."

I heard him once give a very judicious practical advice upon this subject. "A man, (said he,) who has been drinking wine at all freely, should never go into a new company. With those who have

¹ The manner in which this story is told, the phrases, "one who loved mischief," and "thinking to produce a severe censure," the recording Johnson's rebuke of the talebearer, are pleasantly characteristic of the biographer, and

show that he was the "friend" who had drunk too much. "I was heartily disgusted with Mr Boswell," writes Hannah More, fifteen years later, "who came upstairs much disordered with wine."

partaken of wine with him, he may be pretty well in unison, but he will probably be offensive, or appear ridiculous, to other people "

He allowed very great influence to education "I do not deny, Sir, but there is some original difference in minds, but it is nothing in comparison of what is formed by education. We may instance the science of *numbers*, which all minds are equally capable of attaining, yet we find a prodigious difference in the powers of different men, in that respect, after they are grown up, because their minds have been more or less exercised in it, and I think the same cause will explain the difference of excellence in other things, gradations admitting always some difference in the first principles "

This is a difficult subject, but it is best to hope that diligence may do a great deal. We are *sure* of what it can do, in increasing our mechanical force and dexterity.

I again visited him on Monday. He took occasion to enlarge, as he often did, upon the wretchedness of a sea-life. "A ship is worse than a gaol. There is, in a gaol, better air, better company, better conveniency of every kind, and a ship has the additional disadvantage of being in danger. When men come to like a sea-life, they are not fit to live on land."—"Then (said I,) it would be cruel in a father to breed his son to the sea." JOHNSON "It would be cruel in a father who thinks as I do. Men go to sea, before they know the unhappiness of that way of life, and when they have come to know it, they cannot escape from it, because it is then too late to choose another profession, as indeed is generally the case with men, when they have once engaged in any particular way of life."

On Tuesday, March 19, which was fixed for our proposed jaunt, we met in the morning at the Somerset coffee-house in the Strand, where we were taken up by the Oxford coach. He was accompanied by Mr Gwyn, the architect, and a gentleman of Merton College, whom we did not know. Had the fourth seat. We soon got into conversation, for it was very remarkable of Johnson, that the presence of a stranger was no restraint upon his talk. I observed that Garrick, who was about to quit the stage, would soon have an easier life. JOHNSON "I doubt that, Sir." BOSWELL "Why, Sir, he will be Atlas with the burthen off his back." JOHNSON "But I know not, Sir, if he will be so steady without his load. However, he should never play any more, but be entirely the gentleman, and not partly the player. he should no longer subject himself to be hissed by a mob, or to be insolently treated by performers, whom he used to rule with a high hand, and who would gladly retaliate."¹

¹ Johnson's prophecy was curiously fulfilled. When Garrick, a short time

BOSWELL. "I think he should play once a year for the benefit of decayed actors, as it has been said he means to do" JOHNSON. "Alas, Sir! he will soon be a decayed actor himself"

Johnson expressed his disapprobation of ornamental architecture, such as magnificent columns supporting a portico, or expensive pilasters supporting merely their own capitals, "because it consumes labour disproportionate to its utility" For the same reason he satyrised statuary "Painting (said he,) consumes labour not disproportionate to its effect, but a fellow will hack half a year at a block of marble to make something in stone that hardly resembles a man The value of statuary is owing to its difficulty You would not value the finest head cut upon a carrot" Here he seemed to me to be strangely deficient in taste, for surely statuary is a noble art of imitation, and preserves a wonderful expression of the varieties of the human frame, and although it must be allowed that the circumstances of difficulty enhances the value of a marble head, we should consider, that if it requires a long time in the performance, it has a proportionate value in durability

Gwyn was a fine lively rattling fellow Dr Johnson kept him in subjection, but with a kindly authority The spirit of the artist, however, rose against what he thought a Gothic attack, and he made a brisk defence "What, Sir, will you allow no value to beauty in architecture or in statuary? Why should we allow it then in writing? Why do you take the trouble to give us so many fine allusions, and bright images, and elegant phrases? You might convey all your instruction without these ornaments" Johnson smiled with complacency, but said, "Why, Sir, all these ornaments are useful, because they obtain an easier reception for truth, but a building is not at all more convenient for being decorated with superfluous carved work"

Gwyn at last was lucky enough to make one reply to Dr. Johnson, which he allowed to be excellent Johnson censured him for taking down a church which might have stood many years, and building a new one at a different place, for no other reason but that there might be a direct road to a new bridge and his expression was, "You are taking a church out of the way, that the people may go in a straight line to the bridge"—"No, Sir, (said Gwyn) I am putting the church in the way, that the people may not go out of the way."

after his retirement, was dining with the members of the Theatrical Fund, he was treated with gross rudeness by some of the performers, and when he came to his old theatre to give instruction to a

young player, he was insulted by the elder Sheridan, who took it as an intrusion The great actor was deeply wounded by such treatment—*See Gar. Cor.*, vol. II

JOHNSON (with a hearty loud laugh of approbation,) "Speak no more Rest your colloquial fame upon this."

Upon our arrival at Oxford, Dr Johnson and I went directly to University College, but were disappointed on finding that one of the fellows, his friend Mr Scott, who accompanied him from Newcastle to Edinburgh, was gone to the country. We put up at the Angel inn, and passed the evening by ourselves in easy and familiar conversation Talking of constitutional melancholy, he observed, "A man so afflicted, Sir, must divert distressing thoughts, and not combat with them" BOSWELL "May not he think them down, Sir?" JOHNSON "No, Sir. To attempt to *think them down* is madness He should have a lamp constantly burning in his bed-chamber during the night, and if wakefully disturbed, take a book, and read, and compose himself to rest To have the management of the mind is a great art, and it may be attained in a considerable degree by experience and habitual exercise" BOSWELL "Should not he provide amusements for himself? Would it not, for instance, be right for him to take a course of chymistry?" JOHNSON "Let him take a course of chymistry, or a course of rope-dancing, or a course of any thing to which he is inclined at the time Let him contrive to have as many retreats for his mind as he can, as many things to which it can fly from itself Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy' is a valuable work It is, perhaps, overloaded with quotation But there is great spirit and great power in what Burton says, when he writes from his own mind"

Next morning we visited Dr. Wetherell, Master of University College, with whom Dr Johnson conferred on the most advantageous mode of disposing of the books printed at the Clarendon press, on which subject his letter has been inserted in a former page I often had occasion to remark, Johnson loved business, loved to have his wisdom actually operate on real life Dr. Wetherell and I talked of him without reserve in his own presence WETHERELL "I would have given him a hundred guineas if he would have written a preface to his 'Political Tracts,' by way of a Discourse on the British Constitution" BOSWELL "Dr. Johnson, though in his writings, and upon all occasions a great friend to the constitution both in church and state, has never written expressly in support of either There is really a claim upon him for both. I am sure he could give a volume of no great bulk upon each, which would comprise all the substance, and with his spirit would effectually maintain them He should erect a fort on the confines of each" I could perceive that he was displeased by this dialogue. He burst out, "Why should I be

always writing?" I hoped he was conscious that the debt was just, and meant to discharge it, though he disliked being dunned.

We then went to Pembroke College, and waited on his old friend Dr. Adams, the master of it, whom I found to be a most polite, pleasing, communicative man. Before his advancement to the headship of his College, I had intended to go and visit him at Shrewsbury, where he was rector of St Chad's, in order to get from him what particulars he could recollect of Johnson's academical life. He now obligingly gave me part of that authentick information, which, with what I afterwards owed to his kindness, will be found incorporated in its proper place in this work.

Dr Adams had distinguished himself by an able answer to David Hume's "Essay on Miracles." He told me he had once dined in company with Hume in London, that Hume shook hands with him, and said, "You have treated me much better than I deserve," and that they exchanged visits. I took the liberty to object to treating an infidel writer with smooth civility. Where there is a controversy concerning a passage in a classic author, or concerning a question in antiquities, or any other subject in which human happiness is not deeply interested, a man may treat his antagonist with politeness and even respect. But where the controversy is concerning the truth of religion, it is of such vast importance to him who maintains it, to obtain the victory, that the person of an opponent ought not to be spared. If a man firmly believes that religion is an invaluable treasure, he will consider a writer who endeavours to deprive mankind of it as a *robber*, he will look upon him as *odious* though the Infidel may think himself in the right. A robber who reasons as the gang do in the "Beggar's Opera," who call themselves *practical* philosophers, and may have as much sincerity as pernicious *speculative* philosophers, is not the less an object of just indignation. An abandoned profligate may think that it is not wrong to debauch my wife, but shall I, therefore, not detest him? And if I catch him making an attempt shall I treat him with politeness? No, I will kick him down stairs, or run him through the body: that is, if I really love my wife, or have a true rational notion of honour. An Infidel then should not be treated handsomely by a Christian, merely because he endeavour, to rob with ingenuity. I do declare, however, that I am exceedingly unwilling to be provoked to anger and could I be persuaded that truth would not suffer from a cool moderation in its defenders, I should wish to preserve good humour, at least, in every controversy, nor indeed, do I see why a man should lose his temper while he does all he can to refute an opponent. I think ridicule

may be fairly used against an infidel, for instance, if he be an ugly fellow, and yet absurdly vain of his person, we may contrast his appearance with Cicero's beautiful image of Virtue, could she be seen. Johnson coincided with me and said, "When a man voluntarily engages in an important controversy, he is to do all he can to lessen his antagonist, because authority from personal respect has much weight with most people, and often more than reasoning. If my antagonist writes bad language, though that may not be essential to the question, I will attack him for his bad language." ADAMS "You would not jostle a chimney-sweeper." JOHNSON "Yes, Sir, if it were necessary to jostle him *down*."

Dr Adams told us, that in some of the Colleges at Oxford, the fellows had excluded the students from social intercourse with them in the common room. JOHNSON. "They are in the right, Sir, for there can be no real conversation, no fair exertion of mind amongst them, if the young men are by; for a man who has a character does not choose to stake it in their presence." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, may there not be very good conversation without a contest for superiority?" JOHNSON "No animated conversation, Sir, for it cannot be but one or other will come off superiour. I do not mean that the victor must have the better of the argument, for he may take the weak side, but his superiority of parts and knowledge will necessarily appear and he to whom he thus shews himself superiour is lessened in the eyes of the young men. You know it was said, '*Mallet cum Scaligero errare quum cum Clavio rectè sapere*' In the same manner take Bentley's and Jason de Neres' Comments upon Horace, you will admire Bentley more when wrong, than Jason when right."

We walked with Dr. Adams into the master's garden, and into the common room. JOHNSON. (after a reverie of meditation,) "Aye! Here I used to play at drafts with Phil Jones and Fludyer. Jones loved beer, and did not get very forward in the church. Fludyer turned out a scoundrel, a Whig, and said he was ashamed of having been bred at Oxford. He had a living at Putney, and got under the eye of some retainers to the court at that time, and so became a violent Whig but he had been a scoundrel all along, to be sure." BOSWELL "Was he a scoundrel, Sir, in any other way than being a political scoundrel? Did he cheat at drafts?" JOHNSON "Sir, we never played for *money*."

He then carried me to visit Dr. Bentham, Canon of Christ-Church, and Divinity Professor, with whose learned and lively conversation we were much pleased. He gave us an invitation to dinner, which Dr. Johnson told me was a high honour. "Sir,

it is a great thing to dine with the Canons of Christ-Church." We could not accept his invitation, as we were engaged to dine at University College. We had an excellent dinner there, with the Master and Fellows,¹ it being St Cuthbert's day, which is kept by them as a festival, as he was a saint of Durham, with which this College is much connected.

We drank tea with Dr Horne, President of Magdalen College, now Bishop of Norwich, of whose abilities, in different respects, the publick has had eminent proofs, and the esteem annexed to whose character was increased by knowing him personally. He had talked of publishing an edition of Walton's Lives, but had laid aside that design, upon Dr Johnson's telling him, from mistake, that Lord Hailes intended to do it. I had wished to negotiate between Lord Hailes and him, that one or other should perform so good a work. JOHNSON "In order to do it well, it will be necessary to collect all the editions of Walton's Lives. By way of adapting the book to the taste of the present age, they have, in a later edition, left out a vision which he relates Dr. Donne had, but it should be restored, and there should be a critical catalogue given of the works of the different persons whose lives were written by Walton, and therefore their works must be carefully read by the editor."

We then went to Trinity College, where he introduced me to Mr Thomas Warton, with whom we passed a part of the evening. We talked of biography—JOHNSON "It is rarely well executed. They only who live with a man can write his life with any genuine exactness and discrimination, and few people who have lived with a man know what to remark about him. The chaplain of a late Bishop, whom I was to assist in writing some memoirs of his Lordship, could tell me almost nothing."²

I said, Mr Robert Dodsley's life should be written, as he had been so much connected with the wits of his time, and by his literary merit had raised himself from the station of a footman. Mr Warton said, he had published a little volume under the title of "The Muse in Livery." JOHNSON "I doubt whether Dodsley's

Crit. et Ad.—Line 30. For "almost nothing" read "scarcely any thing," and upon "thing" put the following note—"It has been mentioned to me by an accurate English friend, that Dr Johnson could never have used the phrase *almost nothing*, as not being English, and therefore I have put another in its place. At the same time, I am not quite convinced it is not good English. For the best writers use this phrase '*little or nothing*,' i.e. almost as to be nothing."

¹ Mr Croker was fortunate enough to hear from Mr Fisher, then a young Fellow of the College, a short report of the

conversation.

² The bishop was Dr Pearce, and the chaplain Mr Durbey.

brother would thank a man who should write his life: yet Dodsley himself was not unwilling that his original low condition should be recollected. When Lord Lyttelton's 'Dialogues of the Dead' came out, one of which is between Apicius, an ancient epicure, and Darteneuf, a modern epicure, Dodsley said to me, 'I knew Darteneuf well, for I was once his footman.'

Biography led us to speak of Dr. John Campbell, who had written a considerable part of the "*Biographia Britannica*" Johnson, though he valued him highly, was of opinion that there was not so much in his great work, "A Political Survey of Great-Britain," as the world had been taught to expect, and had said to me, that he believed Campbell's disappointment, on account of the bad success of that work, had killed him. He this evening observed of it, "That work was his death." Mr. Warton, not adverting to his meaning, answered, "I believe so, from the great attention he bestowed on it." JOHNSON "Nay, Sir, he died of want of attention, if he died at all by that book."

We talked of a work much in vogue at that time, written in a very mellifluous style, but which, under pretext of another subject, contained much artful infidelity.¹ I said it was not fair to attack us thus unexpectedly, he should have warned us of our danger, before we entered his garden of flowery eloquence, by advertising, "Spring-guns and man-traps set here." The authour had been an Oxonian, and was remembered there for having "turned Papist." I observed, that as he had changed several times—from the Church of England to the Church of Rome—from the Church of Rome to infidelity—I did not despair yet of seeing him a methodist preacher. JOHNSON. (laughing,) "It is said, that his range has been more extensive, and that he has once been Mahometan. However, now that he has published his infidelity, he will probably persist in it." BOSWELL. "I am not quite sure of that, Sir."

I mentioned Sir Richard Steele having published his "Christian Hero," with the avowed purpose of obliging himself to lead a religious life, yet, that his conduct was by no means strictly suitable. JOHNSON "Steele, I believe, practised the lighter vices."

Mr Warton, being engaged, could not sup with us at our inn; we had therefore another evening by ourselves. I asked Johnson, whether a man's being forward in making himself known to eminent

Cor et Ad—Line 11. On "expect" put the following note—"Yet surely it is a very useful work, and of wonderful research and labour for one man to have executed."

people, and seeing as much of life, and getting as much information as he could in every way, was not yet lessening himself by his forwardness. JOHNSON "No, Sir, a man always makes himself greater as he increases his knowledge."

I censured some ludicrous fantastick dialogues between two coach-horses, and other such stuff, which Baretti had lately published. He joined with me, and said, "Nothing odd will do long. 'Tristram Shandy' did not last." I expressed a desire to be acquainted with a lady¹ who had been much talked of, and universally celebrated for extraordinary address and insinuation. JOHNSON. "Never believe extraordinary characters which you hear of people. Depend upon it, Sir, they are exaggerated. You do not see one man shoot a great deal higher than another." I mentioned Mr. Burke. JOHNSON "Yes, Burke is an extraordinary man. His stream of mind is perpetual." It is very pleasing to me to record, that Johnson's high estimation of the talents of this gentleman was uniform from their early acquaintance. Sir Joshua Reynolds informs me, that when Mr. Burke was first elected a member of parliament, and Sir John Hawkins expressed a wonder at his attaining a seat, Johnson said, "Now we who know Burke, know, that he will be one of the first men in this country." And once, when Johnson was ill, and unable to exert himself as much as usual without fatigue, Mr. Burke having been mentioned, he said, "That fellow calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now, it would kill me." So much was he accustomed to consider conversation as a contest, and such was his notion of Burke as an opponent.

Next morning, Thursday, March 21, we set out in a post chaise to pursue our ramble. It was a delightful day, and we drove through Blenheim Park. When I looked at the magnificent bridge built by John Duke of Marlborough, over a small rivulet, and recollected the Epigram made upon it—

"The lofty arch his high ambition shows,
The stream, an emblem of his bounty flows."

and saw that now by the genius of Brown a magnificent body of water was collected, I said, "They have *divined* the Epigram." I observed to him, while in the midst of the noble scene around us, "You and I, Sir, have, I think, seen together the extremes of what can be seen in Britain,—the wild rough island of Mull, and Blenheim Park."

We dined at an excellent inn at Chapel house, where he expatiated

¹ The allusion is probably to Mrs. Ruid of whom more later.

on the felicity of England in its taverns and inns, and triumphed over the French for not having, in any perfection, the tavern life. "There is no private house (said he,) in which people can enjoy themselves so well, as at a capital tavern. Let there be ever so great plenty of good things, ever so much grandeur, ever so much elegance, ever so much desire that everybody should be easy; in the nature of things it cannot be. there must always be some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the house is anxious to entertain his guests, the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him. and no man, but a very impudent dog indeed, can as freely command what is in another man's house, as if it were his own. Whereas, at a tavern, there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are sure you are welcome and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward, in proportion as they please. No, Sir, there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn." He then repeated, with great emotion, Shenstone's lines.

"Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn."^a

^a We happened to lyc this night at the inn at Henley, where Shenstone wrote these lines. [The present "Red Lion"]

Cor et Ad—Line 19. On "inn," put the following note—"Sir John Hawkins has preserved very few *Memorabilia* of Johnson. There is, however, to be found in his bulky tome, a very excellent one upon this subject. 'In contradiction to those, who, having a wife and children, prefer domestick enjoyments to those which a tavern affords, I have heard him assert, that a *tavern chair* was the *throne of human felicity*.'—As soon (said he) as I enter the door of a tavern, I experience an oblivion of care, and a freedom from solicitude when I am seated, I find the master courteous, and the servants obsequious to my call, anxious to know and ready to supply my wants wine there exhilarates my spirits, and prompts me to free conversation and an interchange of discourse with those whom I most love. I dogmatise and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinion and sentiments I find delight." "

Ibid—Line 24. On "inn" put the following note—"We happened to lyc this night at the inn at Henley, where Shenstone wrote these lines, which I give as they are found in the corrected edition of his works, published after his death. In Dodsley's collection the stanza ran thus—

"Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
Where'er his various tour has been,
May sigh to think how oft he found
His warmest welcome at an inn."

Then read in the text as follows—"My illustrious friend, I thought, did not sufficiently admire Shenstone. That ingenious and elegant gentleman's opinion of

In the afternoon, as we were driven rapidly along in the post-chaise, he said to me, "Life has not many things better than this."

We stopped at Stratford upon-Avon, and drank tea and coffee; and it pleased me to be with him upon the classic ground of Shakespeare's native place

He spoke slightly of Dyer's "Fleece"—"The subject, Sir, cannot be made poetical. How can a man write poetically of serges and druggets? Yet you will hear many people talk to you gravely of that *excellent* poem, 'THE FLEECE'." Having talked of Dr. Grainger's "Sugar Cane," I mentioned to him Mr. Langton's having told me, that this poem, when read in manuscript at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, had made all the assembled wits burst into a laugh, when, after much blank verse pomp, the poet began a new paragraph thus—

"Now, Muse, let's sing of rats"

And what increased the ridicule was, that one of the company, who only overlooked the reader, perceived that the word had been originally *maice*, and had been altered to *rats*, as more dignified *

Johnson appears in one of his letters to Mr. Greaves, dated Feb 9 1760. "I have lately been railing one or two volumes of the Rambler, who excepting against some few burlesques in his manner, and the want of more examples to enliven, is one of the most nervous most perspicuous most concise, most harmonious prose writers I know. A learned diction improves by time."

* Such is this little laughable incident which has been often related. Dr. Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, who was an intimate friend of Dr. Grainger, and has a particular regard for his memory, has communicated to me the following explanation—

The passage in question was originally not liable to such a perversion, for the author having occasion in that part of his work to mention the havoc made by rats and mice, had introduced the subject in a kind of mock heroick and a parody of Homer's battle of the frogs and mice, invoking the Muse of the old Grecian bard in an elegant and well-turned manner. In that state I had seen it, but afterwards, unknown to me and other friends, he had been persuaded, contrary to his own better judgement, to alter it so as to produce the unlucky effect above mentioned.

The Bishop gives this character of Dr. Grainger—"He was not only a man of genius and learning but had many excellent virtues, being one of the most generous, friendly, and benevolent men I ever knew."

(*) *et Ad*—In the notes, after "above mentioned," read, "The above was written by the bishop when he had not the Poem itself to recur to, and though the account given was true of it at one period, yet is Dr. Grainger afterwards altered the passage in question, the remarks in the text do not now apply to the printed poem."

et Ad—Line 18. After "dignified" read, "This passage does not appear in the printed work. Dr. Grainger or some of his friends, it should seem, having become sensible that introducing even *rats* in a grave poem might be liable to banter. He, however, could not bring himself to relinquish the idea, for they are thus in a still more ludicrous manner, emphatically exhibited in his poem as it now stands—

"Nor with less waste the whisker'd vermin rice,
A countless clan, despoil the lowland cane."

* These modifications of text and notes are due to some expostulations from Dr. Percy and other friends of Grainger's. "What must I do," writes Anderson to

Johnson said, that Dr Grainger was an agreeable man, a man who would do any good that was in his power. His translation of Tibullus, he thought, was very well done, but "The Sugar-Cane, a Poem," did not please him, for, he exclaimed, "What could he make of a sugar-cane? One might as well write, 'The Parsley-Bed, a Poem;' or, 'The Cabbage-Garden, a Poem.'" BOSWELL. "You must then *pickle* your cabbage with the *sal atticum*." JOHNSON. "You know there is already 'The Hop-Garden, a Poem' and, I think, one could say a great deal about cabbage. The poem might begin with the advantages of civilised society over a rude state, exemplified by the Scotch, who had no cabbages till Oliver Cromwell's soldiers introduced them, and one might thus show how arts are propagated by conquest, as they were by the Roman arms. He seemed to be much diverted with the fertility of his own fancy.

I told him, that I heard Dr Percy was writing the history of the wolf in Great Britain. JOHNSON. "The wolf, Sir! why the wolf? Why does he not write of the beaver, which we had formerly? Nay, it is said we had the beaver. Or why does he not write of the grey rat, the Hanover rat, as it is called, because it is said to have come into this country about the time that the family of Hanover came? I should like to see 'The History of the Grey Rat, by Thomas Percy, D.D. Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majesty,'" (laughing immoderately). BOSWELL. "I am afraid a court chaplain could not decently write of the grey rat." JOHNSON. "Sir, he need not give it the name of the Hanover rat." Thus could he indulge a luxuriant sportive imagination, when talking of a friend whom he loved and esteemed.

He mentioned to me the singular history of an ingenious acquaintance. "He settled as a physician in one of the Leeward

Cur et Ad—Line 30. After "acquaintance," read as follows.—"He had practised physick in various situations with no great emolument. A West-India gentleman, whom he delighted by his conversation, gave him a bond for a handsome annuity during his life, on the condition of his accompanying him to the West-Indies, and living with him there for two years. He accordingly embarked with the gentleman, but upon the voyage, fell in love with a young woman who happened to be one of the passengers, and married the wench. From the imprudence of his disposition he quarrelled with the gentleman, and declared he would have no connection with him. So he forfeited the annuity."

Percy, "with Boswell's ludicrous account of the recitation of 'The Sugar-Cane.' Shall I keep it, and retain your explanations as they now stand?" The bishop answers, "Boswell's ludicrous account of 'The Sugar-Cane' deserves no attention, and need not be mentioned, as the

passage was altered in the printed copy."

Second Edition, note on line 4.—"Dr Johnson said to me, 'Percy, Sir, was angry with me for laughing at "The Sugar-Cane" for he had a mind to make a great thing of Grainger's rats.'"

Islands. A man was sent out to him merely to compound his medicines. This fellow set up as a rival to him in his practice of physick, and got so much the better of him in the opinion of the people of the island, that he carried away all the business, upon which he returned to England, and soon after died."

On Friday, March 22, having set out early from Henley, where we had lain the preceding night, we arrived at Birmingham about nine o'clock and, after breakfast, went to call on his old school fellow Mr Hector. A very stupid maid, who opened the door, told us, that "her master was gone out, he was gone to the country, she could not tell when he would return." In short, she gave us a miserable reception, and Johnson observed, "She would have behaved no better to people who wanted him in the way of his profession." He said to her, "My name is Johnson, tell him I called. Will you remember the name?" She answered with rustick simplicity, in the Warwickshire pronunciation, "I don't understand you, Sir —" "Blockhead, (said he,) I'll write." I never heard the word *blockhead* applied to a woman before, though I do not see why it should not, when there is evident occasion for it. He, however, made another attempt to make her understand him, and roared loud in her ear, "JOHNSON," and then she caught the sound.

We then called on Mr. Lloyd, one of the people called Quakers. He too was not at home, but Mrs. Lloyd was, and received us courteously, and asked us to dinner. Johnson said to me, "After the uncertainty of all human things at Hector's this invitation came very well." We walked about the town, and he was pleased to see it increasing.

I talked of legitimization by subsequent marriage, which obtained in the Roman law, and still obtains in the law of Scotland. JOHNSON "I think it a bad thing, because the chastity of women being of the utmost importance, as all property depends upon it, they who forfeit it should not have any possibility of being restored to good character, nor should the children, by an illicit connection, attain the full rights of lawful children, by the posthumous consent of the offending parties." His opinion upon this subject deserves consideration. Upon his principle there may, at times, be a hardship,

Cor et Ad—Line 19. On "it" put the following note—"My worthy friend Mr. Langton to whom I am under innumerable obligations in the course of my Johnsonian History, has furnished me with a droll illustration of this question. An honest carpenter after giving some anecdote, in his presence, of the ill treatment which he had received from a clergyman's wife who was a noted termagant, and whom he accused of unjust dealing in some transaction with him, added, 'I took care to let her know what I thought of her.' And being asked, 'What did you say?' answered, 'I told her she was a *soundrel*.'" "

and seemingly a strange one, upon individuals, but the general good of society is better secured. And, after all, it is unreasonable in an individual to repine that he has not the advantage of a state which is made different from his own, by the social institution under which he is born. A woman does not complain that her brother, who is younger than her, gets their common father's estate. Why then should a natural son complain that a younger brother, by the same parents lawfully begotten gets it? The operation of law is similar in both cases. Besides, an illegitimate son, who has a younger legitimate brother by the same father and mother, has no stronger claim to the father's estate, than if that legitimate brother had only the same father, from whom alone the estate descends.

Mr Lloyd joined us in the street, and in a little while we met *Friend Hector*, as Mr Lloyd called him. It gave me pleasure to observe the joy which Johnson and he expressed on seeing each other again. Mr. Lloyd and I left them together, while he obligingly shewed me some of the manufactures of this very curious assemblage of artificers. We all met at dinner at Mr Lloyd's, where we were entertained with great hospitality. Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd had been married the same year with their Majesties, and, like them, had been blessed with a numerous family of fine children, their numbers being exactly the same. Johnson said, "Marriage is the best state for man in general, and every man is a worse man, in proportion as he is unfit for the married state."

I have always loved the simplicity of manners, and the spiritual-mindedness of the Quakers, and talking with Mr Lloyd, I observed, that the essential part of religion was piety, a devout intercourse with the Divinity, and that many a man was a Quaker without knowing it.

As Dr Johnson had said to me in the morning, while we walked together, that he liked individuals among the Quakers, but not the sect, when we were at Mr Lloyd's I kept clear of introducing any question concerning the peculiarities of their faith. But I having asked to look at Baskerville's edition of "*Barclay's Apology*," Johnson laid hold of it; and the chapter on baptism happening to open, Johnson remarked, "He says there is neither precept nor practice for baptism, in the scriptures, that is false." Here he was the aggressor, by no means in a gentle manner, and the good Quakers had the advantage of him, for he had read negligently, and had not observed that Barclay speaks of *infant* baptism, which they calmly made him perceive. Mr. Lloyd, however, was in as great a mistake, for when insisting that the right of baptism with water was to cease, when the *spiritual* administration of CHRIST

began, he maintained, that John the Baptist said, "*My baptism shall decrease, but his shall increase*" Whereas the words are, "*He must increase, but I must decrease.*"^a

One of them having objected to the "observance of days, and months, and years," Johnson answered, "The Church does not superstitiously observe days, merely as days, but as memorials of important facts. Christmas might be kept as well upon one day of the year as another but there should be a stated day for commemorating the birth of our Saviour, because there is danger that what may be done on any day, will be neglected."

Mr Hector was so good as to accompany me to see the great works of Mr Bolton, at a place which he has called Soho, about two miles from Birmingham, which the very ingenious proprietor shewed me himself to the best advantage. I wish that Johnson had been with us, for it was a scene which I should have been glad to contemplate by his light. The vastness and the contrivance of some of the machinery would have matched his mighty mind. I shall never forget Mr Bolton's expression to me. "I feel^b here, Sir, what all the world desires to have—Power. He had about seven hundred people at work. I contemplated him as an *iron chieftain*, and he seemed to be a father to his tribe. One of them came to him, complaining grievously of his landlord for having distrained his goods. "Your landlord is in the right, Smith, (said Bolton) But I'll tell you what find you a friend who will lay down one half of your rent, and I'll lay down the other half, and you shall have your goods again."^c

From Mr Hector I now learnt many particulars of Dr. Johnson's early life, which, with others that he gave me at different times since, have contributed to the formation of this work.

Dr Johnson said to me in the morning, "You will see, Sir, at Mr Hector's, his sister, Mr. Careless, a clergyman's widow. She

^a John iii. 30.

^c *Cir et Ad*—Line 10. After "neglected" read, "He said to me at another time, 'Sir, the holidays observed by our church are of great use in religion.' There can be no doubt of this in a limited sense, I mean if the number of such consecrated portions of time be not too extensive. The excellent Mr Nelson's 'Festivals and Fasts,' which has, I understand, the greatest sale of any book ever printed in England, except the Bible, is a most valuable help to devotion, and in addition to it I would recommend two sermons on the same subject, by Mr Pott, Archdeacon of St Alban's, equally distinguished for piety and elegance. I am sorry to have it to say, that Scotland is the only Christian country, Catholic or Protestant, where the great events of our religion are not solemnly commemorated by its ecclesiastical establishment, on days set apart for the purpose."

^b *I feel*, read *'tell*

^c This is all in keeping with what of Boulton. Mr Smiles has collected about the life

was the first woman with whom I was in love. It dropt out of my head imperceptibly, but she and I shall always have a kindness for each other" He laughed at the notion that a man never can be really in love but once, and considered it as a mere romantick fancy.

On our return from Mr Bolton's, Mr Hector took me to his house, where we found Johnson sitting placidly at tea, with his *first love*, who, though now advanced in years, was a genteel woman, very agreeable, and well-bred

Johnson lamented to Mr. Hector the state of one of their school-fellows, Mr Charles Congreve, a clergyman, which he thus described: "He obtained, I believe, considerable preferment in Ireland, but now lives in London, quite as a valetudinarian, afraid to go into any house but his own He takes a short airing in his post-chaise every day He has an elderly woman, whom he calls cousin, who lives with him, and jogs his elbow, when his glass has stood too long empty, and encourages him in drinking, in which he is very willing to be encouraged, not that he gets drunk, for he is a very pious man, but he is always muddy. He confesses to one bottle of port every day, and he probably drinks more He is quite unsocial, his conversation is mono-syllabical: and when, at my last visit, I asked him what a clock it was, that signal of my departure had so pleasing an effect on him, that he sprung up to look at his watch, like a greyhound bounding at a hare"¹ When Johnson took leave of Mr. Hector, he said, "Don't grow like Congreve, nor let me grow like him, when you are near me"

When he again talked of Mrs Careless to-night, he seemed to have had his affection revived, for he said, "If I had married her, it might have been as happy for me" BOSWELL "Pray, Sir, do you not suppose that there are fifty women in the world, with any one of whom a man may be as happy, as with any one woman in particular" JOHNSON. "Aye, fifty thousand" BOSWELL. "Then, Sir, you are not of opinion with some who imagine that certain men and certain women are made for each other, and that they cannot be happy if they miss their counterparts" JOHNSON. "To be sure not, Sir. I believe marriages would in general be as happy, and often more so, if they were all made by the Lord Chancellor, upon a due consideration of characters and circumstances, without the parties having any choice in the matter"

I wished to have staid at Birmingham to-night, to have talked

¹ The "Irish Dr Campbell" also heard him describe the singularities of this class-fellow "A man of great coldness of mind, who could be two years in Lon-

don without letting him know it, and then apologizing by saying that he did not know where to enquire for him"

more with Mr Hector, but my friend was impatient to reach his native city, so we drove on that stage in the dark, and were long pensive and silent. When we came within the focus of the Lichfield lamps, "Now (said he,) we are getting out of a state of death." We put up at the Three Crowns, not one of the great inns, but a good old fashioned one, which was kept by Mr Wilkins, and was the very next house to that in which Johnson was born and brought up, and which was still his own property. We had a comfortable supper, and got into high spirits. I felt all my Toryism glow in this old capital of Staffordshire. I could have offered incense *genio loci*, and I indulged in libations of that ale, which Boniface, in "The Beaux' Stratagem," recommends with such an eloquent jollity.

Next morning he introduced me to Miss Lucy Porter, his step-daughter. She was now an old maid, with much simplicity of manner. She had never been in London. Her brother, a Captain in the navy, had left her a fortune of ten thousand pounds, about a third of which she had laid out in building a stately house, and making a handsome garden, in an elevated situation in Lichfield.¹ Johnson, when here by himself, used to live at her house. She revered him, and he had a parental tenderness for her.

We then visited Mr Peter Garrick, who had that morning received a letter from his brother David, announcing our coming to Lichfield. He was engaged to dinner, but asked us to tea, and to sleep at his house. Johnson, however, would not quit his old acquaintance Wilkins, of the Three Crowns. The family likeness of the Garricks was very striking, and Johnson thought that David's vivacity was not so peculiar to himself as was supposed. "Sir, (said he,) I don't know but if Peter had cultivated all the arts of gaiety as much as David has done, he might have been as brisk and lively. Depend upon it, Sir, vivacity is much an art, and depends greatly on habit." I believe there is a good deal of truth in this, notwithstanding a ludicrous story told me by a lady abroad, of a heavy German baron, who had lived much with the young English at Geneva, and was ambitious to be as lively as they, with which view, he, with assiduous exertion, was jumping over the tables and chairs in his lodgings, and when the people of the house ran in and asked with surprise, what was the matter, he answered, "*Sh' apprens t'etre fif*."

* I went through the house where my illustrious friend was born, with a reverence with which it doubtless will long be visited. An engraved view of it, with the adjacent buildings, is in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for February, 1785.
Cor et Ad — Line 2 For "that" read "another"

¹ A picture of it will be found in an account of Lichfield.
 old guide-book, entitled "A Short Ac-

We dined at our inn, and had with us a Mr. Jackson, one of Johnson's schoolfellows, whom he treated with much kindness, though he seemed to be a low man, dull and untaught. He had a coarse grey coat, black waistcoat, greasy leather breeches, and a yellow uncurled wig, and his countenance had the ruddiness which betokens one who is in no haste to "leave his can." He drank only ale. He had tried to be a cutler at Birmingham, but had not succeeded, and now he lived poorly at home, and had some scheme of dressing leather in a better manner than common, to his indistinct account of which, Dr Johnson listened with patient attention, that he might assist him with his advice. Here was an instance of genuine humanity and real kindness in this great man, who has been most unjustly represented as altogether harsh and destitute of tenderness. A thousand such instances might have been recorded in the course of his long life, though, that his temper was warm and hasty, and his manner often rough, cannot be denied.

I saw here, for the first time, *oat ale*, and oat cakes, not hard as in Scotland, but soft like a Yorkshire cake, were served at breakfast. It was pleasant to me to find, that "*Oats*," the "*food of horses*," were so much used as the *food of the people* in Dr Johnson's own town. He expatiated in praise of Lichfield and its inhabitants, who, he said, were "the most sober, decent people in England, the genteelst in proportion to their wealth, and spoke the purest English." I doubted as to the last article of this eulogy, for they had several provincial sounds, as, *there*, pronounced like *fear*, instead of like *fair*, *oune*, pronounced *wounse*, instead of *wunse*, or *wonse*. Johnson himself never got entirely free of his provincial accent. Garrick sometimes used to take him off, squeezing a lemon into a punch-bowl, with uncouth gesticulations, looking round the company, and calling out, "Who's for *poonsh*?"

Very little business appeared to be going forward in Lichfield. I found however two strange manufactures for so inland a place, sail-cloth and streamers for ships, and I observed them making saddle-cloths, and dressing sheepskins but upon the whole, the busy hand of industry seemed to be quite slackened. "Surely, Sir, (said I,) you are an idle set of people." "Sir, (said Johnson,) we are a city of philosophers we work with our heads, and make the boobies of Birmingham work for us with their hands."

There was at this time a company of players performing at Lichfield. The manager, Mr Stanton,¹ sent his compliments, and

¹ For a sketch of Stanton see the Son of Thespis "curious "Memoirs of an Unfortunate

requested leave to wait on Dr Johnson. Johnson received him very courteously, and he drank a glass of wine with us. He was a plain decent well behaved man, and expressed his gratitude to Dr. Johnson for having once got him permission from Dr Taylor at Ashbourne to play there upon moderate terms. Garrick's name was soon introduced. JOHNSON "Garrick's conversation is gay and grotesque. It is a dish of all sorts, but all good things. There is no solid meat in it. there is a want of sentiment in it. Not but that he has sentiment sometimes, and sentiment too very powerful and very pleasing. but it has not its full proportion in his conversation."

When we were by ourselves he told me, "Forty years ago, Sir, I was in love with an actress here, Miss Emmet, who acted Flora, in 'Hob in the Well.'" What merit this lady had as an actress, or what was her figure, or her manner, I have not been informed. but if we may believe Mr Garrick, his old master, taste in theatrical merit was by no means refined, he was not an *elegans formarum spectator*. Garrick used to tell, that Johnson said of an actor, who played Sir Harry Wildair at Lichfield, "There is a courtly vivacity about the fellow," when in fact, according to Garrick's account, "he was the most vulgar ruffian that ever went upon boards."

We had promised Mr Stanton to be at his theatre on Monday. Dr Johnson jocularly proposed me to write a Prologue for the occasion. "A Prologue, by James Boswell, Esq from the Hebrides." I was really inclined to take the hint. Methought, "Prologue, spoken before Dr Samuel Johnson, at Lichfield, 1776," would have sounded as well as 'Prologue, spoken before the Duke of York, at Oxford, in Charles the Second's time. Much might have been said of what Lichfield had done for Shakspeare, by producing Johnson and Garrick. But I found he was averse to it.

We went and viewed the museum of Mr Richard Green, apothecary here, who told me he was proud of being a relation of Dr Johnson's. It was, truly, a wonderful collection, both of antiquities and natural curiosities, and ingenious works of art. He had all the articles accurately arranged with their names upon labels, printed at his own little press, and on the staircase leading to it was a board, with the names of contributors marked in gold letters. A printed catalogue of the collection was to be had at a bookseller's. Johnson expressed his admiration of the activity and diligence and good fortune of Mr Green, in getting together, in his situation, so great a variety of things, and Mr Green told me, that Johnson once said to him, "Sir, I should as soon have thought of building a man of war, as of collecting such a museum." Mr Green's

obliging alacrity in shewing it was very pleasing. His engraved portrait, with which he has favoured me, has a motto truly characteristic of his disposition, "*Nemo sibi vivat*"

A physician being mentioned who had lost his practice, because his whimsically changing his religion had made people distrustful of him, I maintained that this was unreasonable, as religion is unconnected with medical skill JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not unreasonable, for when people see a man absurd in what they understand, they may conclude the same of him in what they do not understand. If a physician were to take to eating of horse-flesh, nobody would employ him, though one may eat horse-flesh, and be a very skilful physician. If a man were educated in an absurd religion, his continuing to profess it would not hurt him, though his changing to it would."

We drank tea and coffee at Mr. Peter Garrick's, where was Mrs Aston, one of the maiden sisters of Mrs Walmsley, wife of Johnson's first friend, and sister also of the lady of whom Johnson used to speak with the warmest admiration, by the name of Molly Aston, who was afterwards married to Captain Brodie of the navy.

On Sunday, March 24, we breakfasted with Mrs Cobb, a widow lady, who lived in an agreeable sequestered place close by the town, called the Friary, it having been formerly a religious house. She and her niece, Miss Adey, were great admirers of Dr. Johnson, and he behaved to them with a kindness and easy pleasantry, such as we see between old and intimate acquaintance. He accompanied Mrs Cobb to St Mary's church, and I went to the cathedral, where I was very much delighted with the musick, finding it to be peculiarly solemn, and accordant with the words of the service.

We dined at Mr Peter Garrick's, who was in a very lively humour, and verified Johnson's saying, that if he had cultivated gaiety as much as his brother David, he might have equally excelled in it. He was to-day quite a London narrator, telling us a variety of anecdotes with that earnestness and attempt at mimicry which we usually find in the wits of the metropolis. Dr. Johnson went with me to the cathedral in the afternoon. It was grand and pleasing to contemplate this illustrious writer, now full of fame, worshipping in "the solemn temple" of his native city.

I returned to tea and coffee at Mr. Peter Garrick's, and then found Dr Johnson at the Reverend Mr Seward's, Canon Residentiary, who inhabited the Bishop's palace, in which Mr. Walmsley lived, and which had been the scene of many happy hours in Johnson's early life. Mr Seward had, with ecclesiastical hospitality and politeness, asked me in the morning merely as a stranger, to dine with him;

and in the afternoon, when I was introduced to him, he asked Dr Johnson and me to spend the evening and sup with him. He was a genteel well-bred dignified clergyman, had travelled with Lord Charles Fitzroy, uncle of the present Duke of Grafton, who died when abroad, and he had lived much in the great world. He was an ingenious and literary man, had published an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, and written verses in Dodsley's collection. His lady was the daughter of Mr Hunter, Johnson's first schoolmaster. And now, for the first time, I had the pleasure of seeing his celebrated daughter, Miss Anna Seward, to whom I have since been indebted for many civilities, as well as some obliging communications concerning Johnson.

Mr Seward mentioned to us the observations which he had made upon the strata of earth in volcanos, from which it appeared, that they were so very different in depth in different periods, that no calculation whatever could be made as to the time required for their formation. This fully refuted an anti-mosaical remark introduced into Captain Byron's entertaining Tour, I hope heedlessly, from a kind of vanity which is too common in those who have not sufficiently studied the most important of all subjects. Dr Johnson, indeed, had said before independent of this observation, "Shall all the accumulated evidence of the history of the world,—shall the authority of what is unquestionably the most ancient writing, be overturned by an uncertain remark such as this?"

On Monday, March 25, we breakfasted at Mrs Lucy Porter's. He had sent an express to Dr Taylor's, acquainting him of our being at Lichfield, and Taylor had returned an answer that his post-chaise should come for us this day. While we sat at breakfast, Dr Johnson received a letter by the post, which seemed to agitate him very much. When he had read it, he exclaimed "One of the most dreadful things that has happened in my time." The phrase *my time*, like the word *age* is usually understood to refer to an event of a public or general nature. I imagined something like an assassination of the King—like a gunpowder plot carried into execution—or like another fire of London. When asked "What is it, Sir?" he answered, "Mr Thrale has lost his only son." This was, no

¹ Ralph was her second boy," writes Barette in his *Marginalia*, "that died soon after, in consequence of his being dipped by her under inoculation. O she was a wonderful physician! Did she own that she herself poisoned little Harry?"

She had a craze," says this malignant commentator, "for poisoning her children, and he seems to insinuate that

he saved "Queeney" from the fate of her brothers, by preventing Mrs Thrale administering pills to her." God knows what lies the woman wrote to Johnson. The girls were never so happy as when their mother was away, who did nothing but scold or beat them for the most trifling faults or omissions. As to me, I made them run merrily about, and nobody

doubt, a very great affliction to Mr. and Mrs Thrale, which their friends would consider accordingly, but from the manner in which the intelligence of it was communicated by Johnson, it appeared for the moment to be comparatively small. I however, soon felt a sincere concern, and was curious to observe how Dr Johnson would be affected. He said, "This is a total extinction to their family, as much as if they were sold into captivity." Upon my mentioning that Mr. Thrale had daughters, who might inherit his wealth,— "Daughters, (said Johnson, warmly,) he'll no more value his daughters than—" I was going to speak—"Sir, (said he,) don't you know how you yourself think?" Sir, he wishes to propagate his name." In short, I saw male succession strong in his mind, even where there was no name, no family of any long standing. I said, it was lucky he was not present when this misfortune happened. JOHNSON. "It is lucky for *me*. People in distress never think that you feel enough." BOSWELL. "And, Sir, they will have the hope of seeing you, which will be a relief in the meantime, and when you get to them, the pain will be so far abated, that they will be capable of being consoled by you, which in the first violence of it, I believe, would not be the case." JOHNSON. "No, Sir, violent pain of mind, as violent pain of body, *must* be severely felt." BOSWELL. "I own, Sir, I have not so much feeling for the distress of others, as some people have, or pretend to have. but I know this, that I would do all in my power to relieve them." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is affectation to pretend to feel the distress of others, as much as they do themselves. It is equally so, as if one should pretend to feel as much pain while a friend's leg is cutting off, as he does. No, Sir, you have expressed the rational and just nature of sympathy. I would have gone to the extremity of the earth to have preserved this boy."

He was soon quite calm. The letter was from Mr Thrale's clerk, and concluded "I need not say how much they wish to see you in London." He said, "We shall hasten back from Taylor's."

Mrs Lucy Porter and some other ladies of the place talked a great deal of him when he was out of the room, not only with veneration but affection. It pleased me to find that he was so much *beloved* in his native city.

Mrs Aston, whom I had seen the preceding night, and her sister, Mrs Gastrel, a widow lady, had each a house and garden, and pleasure ground, prettily situated upon Stowhill, a gentle eminence

checked their mirth but their beastly mother"—*Marginalia* "Cruel, cruel

Baretti," she writes on the margin of his attack in the *Europ Mag*

adjoining to Lichfield¹ Johnson walked away to dinner there, leaving me by myself without any apology, I wondered at this want of that facility of manners, from which a man has no difficulty in carrying a friend to a house where he is intimate, I felt it very unpleasant to be thus left in solitude in a country town, where I was an entire stranger, and began to think myself unkindly deserted; but I was soon relieved, and convinced that my friend instead of being deficient in delicacy, had conducted the matter with perfect propriety, for I received the following note in his hand-writing: "Mrs Gastrel, at the lower house on Stowhill, desires Mr Boswell's company to dinner at two." I accepted of the invitation, and had here another proof how amiable his character was in the opinion of those who knew him best. I was not informed, till afterwards, that Mrs Gastrel's husband was the clergyman who, while he lived at Stratford upon Avon, where he was proprietor of Shakspeare's garden, with Gothick barbarity cut down his mulberry-tree, and, as Dr Johnson told me, did it to vex his neighbours. His lady, I have reason to believe, participated in the guilt of what the enthusiasts for our immortal bard deem almost a species of sacrilege.

After dinner Dr Johnson wrote a letter to Mrs Thrale, on the death of her son. I said it would be very distressing to Thrale, but she would soon forget it, as she had so many things to think of. JOHNSON "No, Sir, Thrale will forget it first. She has many things that she *may* think of. He has many things that he *must* think of"². This was a very just remark upon the different effect of those light pursuits which occupy a vacant and easy mind, and those serious engagements which arrest attention, and keep us from brooding over grief.

He observed of Lord Bute, "It was said of Augustus, that it

¹ *Cor. et. Al.*—Lines 16, 17. On "mulberry-tree" put the following note—"See an accurate and animated statement of Mr Gastrel's barbarity, by Mr Malone, in a note on 'Some account of the Life of William Shakspeare,' prefixed to his admirable edition of that Poet's works, Vol. I. p. 118."

² *Ibid.*—Line 18. After "believe," read "on the same authority."

³ The Lichfield guide-book describes these residences, and collects a few traditions of Johnson connected with them. It was remembered that a niece of Admiral Brodie's had met him walking passively on the gravel-walk in front of Mrs Astor's house, and proposed to him, in the dialect of the place, to run a race with her. "Ye main be cheerrfu' mon." The spectacle of Johnson running was so droll, that she lost the race from being

obliged to stop and laugh.

⁴ According to Baith (Marginalia), "the poor man could never subdue his grief on account of his son's death." He gives a picture of the father's distress: "Mr Thrale, both his hands in his waistcoat pocket, sat on an armchair in the corner of the room, with his body so stiffly erect, and with such a ghastly smile on his face, as was quite horrible to behold."—*Europ. Mag.*, 1788.

would have been better for Rome that he had never been born, or had never died. So it would have been better for this nation if Lord Bute had never been minister, or had never resigned."

In the evening we went to the Town-hall, which was converted into a temporary theatre, and saw "Theodosius," with "The Stratford Jubilee." I was happy to see Dr Johnson sitting in a conspicuous part of the pit, and receiving affectionate homage from all his acquaintance. We were quite gay and merry. I afterwards mentioned to him that I condemned myself for being so, when poor Mr and Mrs. Thrale were in such distress. JOHNSON "You are wrong, Sir, twenty years hence Mr and Mrs. Thrale will not suffer much pain from the death of their son. Now, Sir, you are to consider that distance of place, as well as distance of time, operates upon the human feelings. I would not have you be gay in the presence of the distressed, because it would shock them, but you may be gay at a distance. Pain for the loss of a friend, or of a relation whom we love, is occasioned by the want which we feel. In time the vacuity is filled with something else, or, sometimes the vacuity closes up of itself."

Mr Seward and Mr Pearson, another clergyman here, supped with us at our inn, and after they left us, we sat up late as we used to do in London.

Here I shall record some fragments of my friend's conversation during this jaunt.

"Marriage, Sir, is much more necessary to a man than to a woman, for he is much less able to supply himself with domestic comforts. You will recollect my saying to some ladies the other day, that I had often wondered why young women should marry, as they have so much more freedom, and so much more attention paid to them while unmarried, than when married. I indeed did not mention the *strong* reason for their marrying—the *mechanical* reason." BOSWELL "Why that is a strong one. But does not imagination make it seem much more important than it is in reality? Is it not, to a certain degree, a delusion in us as well as in women?" JOHNSON. "Why yes, Sir, but it is a delusion that is always beginning again." BOSWELL "I don't know but there is upon the whole more misery than happiness produced by that passion." JOHNSON "I don't think so, Sir."

"Never speak of a man in his own presence. It is always indelicate, and may be offensive."

"Questioning is not the mode of conversation among gentlemen. It is assuming a superiority, and it is particularly wrong to question a man concerning himself. There may be parts of his former life

which he may not wish to be made known to other persons, or even brought to his own recollection "

" A man should be careful never to tell tales of himself to his own disadvantage. People may be amused and laugh at the time, but they will be remembered, and brought out against him upon some subsequent occasion "

" Much may be done if a man puts his whole mind to a particular object By doing so, Norton has made himself the great lawyer that he is allowed to be. "

I mentioned an acquaintance of mine, a sectary, who was a very religious man, who not only attended regularly on publick worship with those of his communion, but made a particular study of the Scriptures, and even wrote a commentary on some parts of them, yet was known to be very licentious in indulging himself with women, maintaining that men are to be saved by faith alone, and that the Christian religion had not prescribed any fixed rule for the intercourse between the sexes. JOHNSON " Sir, there is no trusting to that crazy piety. "

I observed that it was strange how well Scotchmen were known to one another in their own country, though born in very distant counties, for we do not find that the gentlemen of neighbouring counties in England are mutually known to each other Johnson, with his usual acuteness, at once saw and explained the reason of this, " Why, Sir, you have Edinburgh, where the gentlemen from all your counties meet, and which is not so large but that they are all known There is no such common place of collection in England, except London, where from its great size and diffusion, many of those who reside in contiguous counties of England may long remain unknown to each other "

On Tuesday, March 26, there came for us an equipage properly suited to a wealthy well beneficed clergyman—Dr. Taylor's large, roomy post chaise, drawn by four stout plump horses, and driven by two steady jolly postillions, which conveyed us to Ashbourne, where I found my friend's schoolfellow living upon an establishment perfectly corresponding with his substantial creditable equipage. His house, garden, pleasure grounds, table, in short every thing good, and no scantiness appearing Every man should form such a plan of living as he can execute completely Let him not draw an outline wider than he can fill up I have seen many skeletons of shew and magnificence which excite at once ridicule and pity. Dr. Taylor had a good estate of his own, and good preferment in the church being a prebendary of Westminster, and rector of *Essex*. He was a diligent justice of the peace, and presided

over the town of Ashbourne, to the inhabitants of which I was told he was very liberal, and as a proof of this it was mentioned to me, he had the preceding winter, distributed two hundred pounds among such of them as stood in need of his assistance. He had consequently a considerable political interest in the county of Derby, which he employed to support the Devonshire family, for though the schoolfellow and friend of Johnson, he was a Whig. I could not perceive in his character much congeniality of any sort with that of Johnson, who, however, said to me, "Sir, he has a very strong understanding." His size and figure, and countenance, and manner, were that of a hearty English 'Squire, with the parson super-induced, and I took particular notice of his upper servant, Mr. Peters, a decent grave man, in purple clothes, and a large white wig, like the butler or *major domo* of a Bishop.

Dr. Johnson and Dr. Taylor met with great cordiality, and Johnson soon gave him the same sad account of their schoolfellow, Congreve, that he had given to Mr. Hector, adding a remark of such moment to the rational conduct of a man in the decline of life, that it deserves to be imprinted upon every mind: "There is nothing against which an old man should be so much upon his guard as putting himself to nurse." Innumerable have been the melancholy instances of men once distinguished for firmness, resolution, and spirit, who in their latter days have been governed like children, by interested female artifice.

Dr. Taylor commended a physician who was known to him and Dr. Johnson, and said, "I fight many battles for him, as many people in the country dislike him." JOHNSON. "But you should consider, Sir, that by every one of your victories he is a loser, for, every man of whom you get the better, will be very angry, and will resolve not to employ him, whereas if people get the better of you in argument about him, they'll think, 'We'll send for Dr. ***** nevertheless.'" This was an observation deep and sure in human nature.

Next day we talked of a book¹ in which an eminent judge was arraigned before the bar of the publick, as having pronounced an unjust decision in a great cause. Dr. Johnson maintained that this publication would not give any uneasiness to the Judge. "For (said he,) either he acted honestly, or he meant to do injustice. If he acted honestly, his own consciousness will protect him, if he meant to do injustice, he will be glad to see the man who attacks him, so much vexed."

¹ Stuart's "Letters to Lord Mansfield on the Douglas Cause."

Next day, as Dr Johnson had acquainted Dr. Taylor of the reason for his returning speedily to London, it was resolved that we should set out after dinner. A few of Dr Taylor's neighbours were his guests that day.

Dr. Johnson talked with approbation of one who had attained to the state of the philosophical wise man, that is, to have no want of anything. "Then, Sir, (said I,) the savage is a wise man." "Sir, (said he,) I do not mean simply being without,—but not having a want." I maintained, against this proposition, that it was better to have fine clothes, for instance, than not to feel the want of them. JOHNSON "No, Sir, fine clothes are good only as they supply the want of other means of procuring respect. Was Charles the Twelfth, think you, less respected for his coarse blue coat and black stock? And you find the King of Prussia dresses plain, because the dignity of his character is sufficient." I here brought myself into a scrape, for I heedlessly said, "Would not you, Sir, be the better for velvet and embroidery?" JOHNSON. "Sir, you put an end to all argument when you introduce your opponent himself. Have you no better manners? There is *your want*." I apologised by saying, I had mentioned him as an instance of one who wanted as little as any man in the world, and yet, perhaps, might receive some additional lustre from dress.

Having left Ashbourne in the evening, we stopped to change horses at Derby, and availed ourselves of a moment to enjoy the conversation of my countryman, Dr Butler, then physician there. He was in great indignation because Lord Mountstuart's bill for a Scotch militia had been lost. Dr Johnson was as violent against it. "I am glad, (said he,) that Parliament has had the spirit to throw it out. You wanted to take advantage of the timidity of our scoundrels,"^a (meaning, I suppose, the ministry). It may be observed, that he used the epithet scoundrel very commonly, not quite in the sense in which it is generally understood, but as a strong term of disapprobation, as when he abruptly answered Miss Thrale, who had asked him how he did, "Ready to become a scoundrel, Madam, with a little more spoiling you will, I think, make me a complete rascal."^b—he meant easy to become a capricious and self-indulgent valetudinarian, a character for which I have heard him express great disgust.

Johnson had with him upon this jaunt, "*Il Palermينو d'Inghilterra*," a romance praised by Cervantes, but did not like it much.

^a See vol. II. page 17.

^b Anecdotes of Johnson, p. 176.

Cor. et Ad.—Line 39 For "*Palermينو*" read "*Palmerino*"

He said, he read it for the language, by way of preparation for his Italian expedition — We lay this night at Loughborough

On Thursday, March 28, we pursued our journey I mentioned that old Mr Sheridan complained of the ingratitude of Mr Wedderburne and General Fraser, who had been much obliged to him when they were young Scotchmen entering upon life in England JOHNSON "Why, Sir, a man is very apt to complain of the ingratitude of those who have risen far above him A man when he gets into a higher sphere, into other habits of life, cannot keep up all his former connections Then, Sir, those who knew him formerly upon a level with themselves, may think that they ought still to be treated as on a level, which cannot be, and an acquaintance in a former situation may bring out things which it would be very disagreeable to have mentioned before higher company, though, perhaps, every body knows of them " He placed this subject in a new light to me, and shewed that a man, who has risen in the world, must not be condemned too harshly, for being distant to former acquaintance, even though he may have been much obliged to them It is, no doubt, to be wished that a proper degree of attention should be shewn by great men to their early friends. But if either from obtuse insensibility to difference of situation, or presumptuous forwardness, which will not submit even to an exterior observance of it, the dignity of high place cannot be preserved, when they are admitted into the company of those raised above the state in which they once were, encroachment must be repelled, and the kinder feelings sacrificed. To one of the very fortunate persons whom I have mentioned, namely, Mr Wedderburne, now Lord Loughborough, I must do the justice to relate, that I have been assured by another early acquaintance of his, old Mr Macklin, who assisted him in improving his pronunciation, that he had found him very grateful Macklin, I suppose, had not pressed upon his elevation with so much eagerness as the gentleman who complained of him Dr Johnson's remark as to the jealousy entertained of our friends who rise far above us, is certainly very just By this was withered the early friendship between Charles Townshend and Akenside, and many similar instances might be adduced

He said, "It is commonly a weak man who marries for love." We then talked of marrying women of fortune, and I mentioned a common remark, that a man may be, upon the whole, richer by marrying a woman with a very small portion, because a woman of fortune will be proportionally expensive, whereas a woman who brings none will be very moderate in expences. JOHNSON "Depend

upon it, Sir, this is not true. A woman of fortune being used to the handling of money spends it judiciously but a woman who gets the command of money for the first time upon her marriage, has such a gust in spending it, that she throws it away with great profusion."

He praised the ladies of the present age, insisting that they were more faithful to their husbands, and more virtuous in every respect, than in former times, because their understandings were better cultivated. It was an undoubted proof of his good sense and good disposition, that he was never querulous, never prone to inveigh against the present times, as is so common when superficial minds are on the fret. On the contrary, he was willing to speak favourably of his own age, and, indeed maintained its superiority in every respect, except in its reverence for government, the relaxation of which he imputed, as its grand cause, to the shock which our monarchy received at the Revolution, though necessary, and secondly, to the timid concessions made to faction by successive administrations in the reign of his present Majesty. I am happy to think, that he lived to see the Crown at last recover its just influence.

At Leicester we read in the newspapers that Dr James was dead. I thought that the death of an old school fellow, and one with whom he had lived a good deal in London, would have affected my fellow traveller much but he only said, "Ah! poor Jamy." Afterwards, however, when we were in the chaise, he said, with more tenderness, "Since I set out on this jaunt, I have lost an old friend and a young one,—Dr James and poor Harry, (meaning Mr Thrale's son)."

Having lain at St Alban's on Thursday, March 26, we breakfasted the next morning at Bunet. I expressed to him a weakness of mind which I could not help,—an uneasy apprehension that my wife and children, who were at a great distance from me, might, perhaps, be ill. "Sir, (said he) consider how foolish you should think it in *them* to be apprehensive that *you* are ill." This sudden turn relieved me for the moment, but I afterwards perceived it to be an ingenious fallacy. I might, to be sure be satisfied that they had no reason to be apprehensive about me, because I *knew* that I myself was well but we might have a mutual anxiety, without the charge of folly, because each was, in some degree, uncertain as to the condition of the other.

I enjoyed the luxury of our approach to London, that metropolis which we both loved so much, for the high and varied intellectual pleasure which it furnishes. I experienced immediate happiness

while whirled along with such a companion, and said to him, "Sir, you observed one day at General Oglethorpe's, that a man is never happy for the present, but when he is drunk. Will you not add,—or when driving rapidly in a post-chaise?" JOHNSON "No, Sir, you are driving rapidly *from* something, or *to* something."

Talking of melancholy, he said, "Some men, and very thinking men too, have not those vexing thoughts. Sir Joshua Reynolds is the same all the year round Beauclerk, except when ill and in pain, is the same. But I believe most men have them in the degree in which they are capable of having them. If I were in the country, and were distressed by that malady, I would force myself to take a book, and every time I did it I should find it the easier. Melancholy, indeed, should be diverted by every means but drinking."

We stopped at Messieurs Dillys, booksellers in the Poultry; from whence he hurried away, in a hackney coach, to Mr Thrale's in the Borough. I called at his house in the evening, having promised to acquaint Mrs Williams of his safe return, when, to my surprize, I found him sitting with her at tea, and, as I thought, not in a very good humour. For, it seems, when he got to Mr Thrale's, he found the coach was at the door waiting to carry Mrs and Miss Thrale, and Signor Baretto then Italian master, to Bath.¹ This

Cor et Ad—Line 7. On "thoughts" put the following note—"The phrase 'vexing thoughts,' is, I think, very expressive. It has been familiar to me from my childhood, for it is to be found in the 'Psalms in Metre,' used in the Churches (I believe I should say *kirks*) of Scotland, Psalm xliii v 5

'Why art thou then cast down, my soul?

What should discourage thee?

And why with *vexing thoughts* art thou

Disquieted in me?"

Some allowance must no doubt be made for early prepossession. But at a maturer period of life, after looking at various metrical versions of the Psalms I am well satisfied that the version used in Scotland, is, upon the whole, the best, and that it is vain to think of having a better. It has in general a simplicity and *unction* of sacred Poesy, and in many parts its translation is admirable."

¹ Mrs Thrale had been nearly frantic at the death of her boy. "On the fourth day," says Baretto, "as the fits had nearly ceased, Madame abruptly proposed to set out immediately for Bath, to avoid the sight of the funeral. A few minutes before our setting out, Dr Johnson arrived in a post chaise from Lichfield. As her letter had brought him to town in a hurry, I expected at that moment he would spare me the jaunt, but he made no motion to that effect, though after the sad exchange of a few mournful periods, as is customary on such occasions, we got into the coach and

were soon out of sight"—(*Europ Mag*, 1788). On Boswell's comment, "This was not showing the attention," &c, Mr Croker remarks, "How so?" Johnson had not been very quick in coming, nor had the Thrales any notice of his movements. Their journey must have been settled for days," &c. This shows the idleness of entering on controversies with Boswell on points where he may be presumed to have the best information. For, as we see from Baretto's story, this expedition was a sudden freak of Mrs Thrale's, and her letter had brought Johnson to town.

was not shewing the attention which might have been expected to the "Guide, Philosopher, and Friend," the *Imlack* who had hastened from the country to console a distressed mother, who he understood was very anxious for his return. They had, I found, without ceremony, proceeded on their intended journey. I was glad to understand from him that it was still resolved that his tour to Italy with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale should take place, of which he had entertained some doubt, on account of the loss which they had suffered, and his doubts afterwards proved to be well-founded. He observed, indeed very justly, that "their loss was an additional reason for their going abroad, and if it had not been fixed that he should have been one of the party, he would force them out, but he would not advise them unless his advice was asked, lest they might suspect that he recommended what he wished on his own account." I was not pleased that his intimacy with Mr. Thrale's family, though it no doubt contributed much to his comfort and enjoyment, was not without some degree of restraint. Not, as has been grossly suggested, that it was required of him as a task to talk for the entertainment of them and their company, but that he was not quite at his ease, which, however, might partly be owing to his own honest pride—that dignity of mind which is always jealous of appearing too compliant.

On Sunday, March 31, I called on him and shewed him as a curiosity which I had discovered his "Translation of Lobo's Account of Abyssinia," which Sir John Pringle had lent me it being then little known as one of his works. He said, "Take no notice of it, or don't talk of it." He seemed to think it beneath him, though done at six-and-twenty. I said to him, "Your style, Sir, is much improved since you translated this." He answered with a sort of triumphant smile, "Sir, I hope it is."

On Wednesday, April 3, in the forenoon, I found him very busy putting his books in order, and as they were generally very old ones, clouds of dust were flying around him. He had on a pair of large gloves, such as hedgers use. His present appearance put me in mind of my uncle, Dr. Boswell's description of him, "A robust genius, born to grapple with whole libraries."

I gave him an account of a conversation which had passed between me and Captain Cook, the day before at dinner at Sir John Pringle's, and he was much pleased with the conscientious accuracy of that celebrated circumnavigator, who set me right as to many of the exaggerated accounts given by Dr. Hawkesworth of his Voyages. I told him that while I was with the Captain, I caught the enthusiasm of curiosity and adventure, and felt a strong incli-

nation to go with him on his next voyage JOHNSON "Why, Sir, a man *does* feel so, till he considers how very little he can learn from such voyages" BOSWELL "But one is carried away with the general grand and indistinct notion of A VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, but a man is to guard himself against taking a thing in general" I said I was certain that a great part of what we are told by the travellers to the South Sea must be conjecture, because they had not enough of the language of those countries to understand so much as they have related. Objects falling under the observation of the senses might be clearly known, but every thing intellectual, every thing abstract—politics, morals and religion, must be darkly guessed Dr Johnson was of the same opinion. He upon another occasion, when a friend mentioned to him several extraordinary facts, as communicated to him by the circumnavigators, shily observed, "Sir, I never before knew how much I was respected by these gentlemen, they told *me* none of these things"

He had been in company with Omai, a native of one of the South Sea islands, after he had been some time in this country He was struck with the elegance of his behaviour, and accounted for it thus: "Sir, he had passed his time, while in England, only in the best company; so that all that he had acquired of our manners was genteel As a proof of this, Sir, Lord Mulgrave and he dined one day at Streatham, they sat with their backs to the light fronting me, so that I could not see distinctly, and there was so little of the savage in Omai, that I was afraid to speak to either, lest I should mistake one for the other"

We agreed to dine to-day at the Mitre-tavern, after the rising of the House of Lords, where a branch of the litigation concerning the Douglas estate, in which I was one of the counsel, was to come on. I brought with me Mr Murray, Solicitor-General of Scotland, now one of the Judges of the Court of Session, with the title of Lord Henderland I mentioned Mr Solicitor's relation, Lord Charles Hay, with whom I knew Dr Johnson had been acquainted JOHNSON "I wrote something for Lord Charles, and I thought he had nothing to fear from a court-martial I suffered a great loss when he died, he was a mighty pleasing man in conversation, and a reading man The character of a soldier is high They who stand forth the foremost in danger, for the community, have the respect of mankind An officer is much more respected than any other man who has as little money. In a commercial country money will always purchase respect But you find, an officer, who has properly speaking, no money, is every where well received and treated with

attention. The character of a soldier always stands him in stead." BOSWELL. "Yet, Sir, I think that common soldiers are worse thought of than other men in the same rank of life, such as labourers." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, a common soldier is usually a very gross man, and any quality which procures respect may be overwhelmed by grossness. A man of learning may be so vicious or so ridiculous that you cannot respect him. A common soldier too, generally eats more than he can pay for. But when a common soldier is civil in his quarters, his red coat procures him a degree of respect. The peculiar respect paid to the military character in France was mentioned. BOSWELL. "I should think that where military men are so numerous, they would be less valued as not being rare." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, wherever a particular character or profession is high in the estimation of a people, those who are of it will be valued above other men. We value an Englishman highly in this country, and yet Englishmen are not rare in it."

Mr Murray praised the ancient philosophers for the candour and good humour with which those of different sects disputed with each other. JOHNSON. Sir, they disputed with good humour, because they were not in earnest as to religion. Had the ancients been serious in their belief, we should not have had their Gods exhibited in the manner we find them represented in the Poets. The people would not have suffered it. They disputed with good humour upon their fanciful theories, because they were not interested in the truth of them. When a man has nothing to lose, he may be in good humour with his opponent. Accordingly you see in Lucian, the Epicurean, who argues only negatively, keeps his temper, the Stoick, who has something positive to preserve, grows angry. Being angry with one who controverts an opinion which you value, is a necessary consequence of the uneasiness which you feel. Every man who attacks my belief diminishes in some degree my confidence in it, and therefore makes me uneasy, and I am angry with him who makes me uneasy. Those only who believed in Revelation have been angry at having their faith called in question, because they only had something upon which they could rest as matter of fact." MURRAY. It seems to me that we are not angry at a man for controverting an opinion which we believe and value, we rather pity him." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, to be sure when you wish a man to have that belief which you think is of infinite advantage, you wish well to him, but your primary consideration is your own quiet. If a madman were to come into this room with a stick in his hand, no doubt we should pity the state of his mind, but our primary consideration would be to take care of ourselves. We should knock

him down first, and pity him afterwards. No, Sir, every man will dispute with great good humour upon a subject in which he is not interested. I will dispute very calmly upon the probability of an other man's son being hanged, but if a man zealously enforces the probability that my own son will be hanged, I shall certainly not be in very good humour with him." I added this illustration, "If a man endeavours to convince me that my wife, whom I love very much, and in whom I have great confidence, is a disagreeable woman, and is even unfaithful to me, I shall be very angry, for he is putting me in fear of being unhappy." MURRAY "But, Sir, truth will always bear an examination." JOHNSON "Yes, Sir, but it is painful to be forced to defend it. Consider, Sir, how should you like, though conscious of your innocence, to be tried before a jury for a capital crime, once a week?"

We talked of education at great schools, the advantages and disadvantages of which Johnson displayed in a luminous manner, but his arguments preponderated so much in favour of the benefit which a boy of good parts might receive at one of them, that I have reason to believe Mr Murray was very much influenced by what he had heard to day, in his determination to send his own son to Westminster school.

I introduced the topick, which is often ignorantly urged, that the Universities of England are too rich, so that learning does not flourish in them as it would do, if those who teach had smaller salaries, and depended on their assiduity for a great part of their income. JOHNSON "Sir, the very reverse of this is the truth, the English Universities are not rich enough. Our fellowships are only sufficient to support a man during his studies to fit him for the world, and accordingly in general they are held no longer than till an opportunity offers of getting away. Now and then, perhaps, there is a fellow who grows old in his college, but this is against his will, unless he be a man very indolent indeed. A hundred a year is reckoned a good fellowship, and that is no more than is necessary to keep a man decently as a scholar. We do not allow our fellows to marry, because we consider academical institutions

Cor et Ad—Line 21 After "school," read 'I have acted in the same manner with regard to my own two sons having placed the eldest at Eton, and the second at Westminster. I cannot say which is best. But in justice to both those noble seminaries, I with high satisfaction declare that my boys have derived from them a great deal of good and no evil and I trust they will, like Horace, be grateful to their father for giving them so valuable an education.'

Ibid—Line 23 On "rich" put the following note—"Dr Adam Smith, who was for some time a professor in the University of Glasgow, has uttered, in his 'Wealth of Nations,' some reflections upon this subject which are certainly not well founded, and seem to be invidious."

as preparatory to a settlement in the world. It is only by being employed as a tutor, that a fellow can obtain any thing more than a livelihood. To be sure a man, who has enough without teaching, will probably not teach, for we would all be idle if we could. In the same manner a man who is to get nothing by teaching, will not exert himself. Gresham College was intended as a place of instruction for London, able Professors were to read lectures gratis, they contrived to have no scholars, whereas, if they had been allowed to receive but six-pence a lecture from each scholar, they would have been emulous to have had many scholars. Every body will agree that it should be the interest of those who teach to have scholars, and this is the case in our Universities. That they are too rich is certainly not true, for they have nothing good enough to keep a man of eminent learning; with them for his life. In the foreign Universities a professorship is a high thing. It is as much almost as a man can make by his learning, and therefore we find the most learned men abroad are in the Universities. It is not so with us. Our Universities are impoverished of learning, by the penury of their provisions. I wish there were many places of a thousand a year at Oxford, to keep first rate men of learning from quitting the University. Undoubtedly, if this were the case, Literature would have a still greater dignity and splendour at Oxford, and there would be grander living sources of instruction.

I mentioned Mr Maclaurin's uneasiness on account of a degree of ridicule carelessly thrown on his deceased father, in Goldsmith's "History of Animated Nature, in which that celebrated mathematician is represented as being subject to fits of yawning, so violent as to render him incapable of proceeding in his lecture, a story altogether unfounded but for the publication of which the law would give no reparation." This led us to agitate the question, whether full redress could be obtained, even when a man's deceased relation was calumniated in a publication. Mr Murray maintained there should be reparation, unless the authour could justify himself by proving the fact. JOHNSON "Sir, it is of so much more consequence that truth should be told, than that individuals should not be made uneasy, that it is much better that the law does not restrain writing

^a Dr Goldsmith was dead before Mr Maclaurin discovered the ludicrous error, but Mr Nourse, the bookseller, who was the proprietor of the work, upon being applied to by Sir John Pringle agreed very handsomely to have the leaf on which it was contained cancelled, and re-printed without it, at his own expence.¹

¹ The point of the story was, that the pupils discovered this weakness, and when they wished to bring the lecture to

a close would commence yawning, and thus cause the professor to yawn.—See *History of the Earth*, chap v, vol II.

freely concerning the characters of the dead. Damages will be given to a man who is calumniated in his life-time, because he may be hurt in his worldly interest, or at least hurt in his mind. but the law does not regard that uneasiness which a man feels on having his ancestor calumniated. That is too nice. Let him deny what is said, and let the matter have a fair chance by discussion. But, if a man could say nothing against a character but what he can prove, history could not be written, for a great deal is known of men of which proof cannot be brought. A minister may be notoriously known to take bribes, and yet you may not be able to prove it." Mr Murray suggested, that the authour should be obliged to shew some sort of evidence, though he would not require a strict legal proof: but Johnson firmly and resolutely opposed any restraint whatever, as adverse to a free investigation of the characters of mankind.*

* What Dr Johnson has here said, is undoubtedly good sense, yet I am afraid that law, though defined by Lord Cole "the perfection of reason," is not altogether with him, for it is held in the books, that an attack on the reputation even of a dead man may be punished as a libel, because tending to a breach of the peace. There is however, I believe, no modern decided case to that effect. In the King's Bench, Trinity Term, 1790, the question occurred on occasion of an indictment, *The King v. Topham*, who, as a proprietor of a newspaper (intituled "THE WORLD," was found guilty of a libel against Earl Cowper, deceased, because certain injurious charges against his Lordship were published in that paper. One of the counsel for Mr Topham, my friend Mr Const, who is very able to maintain the argument with learning and ingenuity, informs me that it is intended to move in arrest of judgement, so that we shall probably have a solemn determination, upon a point of universal importance. No man has a higher reverence for the law of England in general than I have, but, with all deference I cannot help thinking, that prosecution by indictment, if a defendant is never to be allowed to justify, must often be very oppressive, unless juries, who I am more and more confirmed in holding to be judges of law as well as of fact, interpose.

Cor et Ad—Note * *Delete* all that stands after "paper," and *read*, "An arrest of judgement having been moved for, the case was afterwards solemnly argued. My friend Mr Const, whom I delight in having an opportunity to praise, not only for his abilities but his manners, a gentleman whose ancient German blood has been mellowed in England, and who may be truly said to unite the *Baron* and the *Barriester*, was one of the counsel for Mr Topham. He displayed much learning and ingenuity upon the general question, which, however, was not decided, as the Court granted an arrest chiefly on the informality of the indictment. No man has a higher reverence for the law of England than I have, but, with all deference I cannot help thinking, that prosecution by indictment, if a defendant is never to be allowed to justify, must often be very oppressive, unless juries, whom I am more and more confirmed in holding to be judges of law as well as of fact, resolutely interpose. Of late an act of Parliament has passed declaratory of their full right to one as well as the other, in matter of libel, and the bill having been brought in by a popular gentleman, many of his party have in most extravagant terms declaimed on the wonderful acquisition to the liberty of the press. For my own part, I ever was clearly of opinion that this right was inherent in the very constitution of a jury, and indeed in sense and reason inseparable from their important function. To establish it, therefore, by statute, is, I think, narrowing its foundation, which is the broad and deep basis of Common Law. Would it not rather weaken the right of primo-geniture, or any other old and universally-acknowledged right, should the legislature pass an act in favour of it. In my Letter to the People of Scotland,

On Thursday, April 4, having called on Dr Johnson, I said, it was a pity that truth was not so firm as to bid defiance to all attacks, so that it might be shot at as much as people chose to attempt, and yet remain unhurt. JOHNSON "Then, Sir, it would not be shot at. Nobody attempts to dispute that two and two make four, but with contests concerning moral truth, human passions are generally mixed, and therefore it must ever be liable to assault and misrepresentation."

On Friday, April 5, being Good-Friday, after having attended the morning service at St Clement's church, I walked home with Johnson. We talked of the Roman Catholick religion. JOHNSON "In the barbarous ages, Sir, priests and people were equally deceived; but afterwards there were gross corruptions introduced by the clergy, such as indulgences to priests to have concubines, and the worship of images, not, indeed, inculcated, but knowingly permitted." He strongly censured the licensed stews at Rome. BOSWELL "So then, Sir, you would allow of no irregular intercourse whatever between the sexes?" JOHNSON "To be sure I would not, Sir. I would punish it much more than is done, and so restrain it. In all countries there has been fornication, as in all countries there has been theft, but there may be more or less of the one, as well as of the other, in proportion to the force of law. All men will naturally commit fornication, as all men will naturally steal. And, Sir, it is very absurd to argue, as has been often done, that prostitutes are necessary to prevent the violent effects of appetite from violating the decent order of life; nay, should be permitted, in order to preserve the chastity of our wives and daughters. Depend upon it, Sir, severe laws, steadily enforced, would be sufficient against those evils, and would promote marriage."

I stated to him this case—"Suppose a man has a daughter who he knows has been seduced, but her misfortune is concealed from the world. should he keep her in his house? Would he not, by doing so, be accessory to imposition? And, perhaps, a worthy unsuspect-

against diminishing the number of the Lords of Session,' published in 1785, there is the following passage, which, as a concise, and I hope a fair and rational state of the matter, I presume to quote. 'The Juries of England are judges of *law* as well as of *fact* in many civil and in all criminal trials. That my principles of *resistance* may not be misapprehended any more than my principles of *submission*, I protest that I should be the last man in the world to encourage Juries to contradict rashly, wantonly, or perversely, the opinion of the Judges. On the contrary, I would have them listen respectfully to the advice they receive from the Bench, by which they may often be well directed in forming *their own opinion*, which, "and not another's," is the opinion they are to return *upon their oaths*. But where, after due attention to all that the Judge has said, they are decidedly of a different opinion from him, they have not only a *power* and a *right*, but they are *bound in conscience* to bring in a verdict accordingly.'"

ing man might come and marry this woman, unless the father inform him of the truth." JOHNSON. "Sir, he is accessory to no imposition. His daughter is in his house, and if a man courts her, he takes his chance. If a friend, or, indeed, if any man asks his opinion whether he should marry her, he ought to advise him against it, without telling why, because his real opinion is then required. Or, if he has other daughters who know of her frailty, he ought not to keep her in his house. You are to consider the state of life is this, we are to judge of one another's characters as well as we can, and a man is not bound, in honesty or honour, to tell us the faults of his daughter or of himself. A man who has debauched his friend's daughter is not obliged to say to every body—'Take care of me, don't let me into your houses without suspicion. I once debauched a friend's daughter. I may debauch yours.'"

Mr. Thrale called upon him, and appeared to bear the loss of his son with a manly composure. There was no affectation about him, and he talked, as usual, about indifferent subjects. He seemed to me to hesitate as to the intended Italian tour, on which, I flattered myself, he and Mrs. Thrale and Dr. Johnson were soon to set out, and, therefore, I pressed it as much as I could. I mentioned that Mr. Beauclerk had said, that Baretto, whom they were to carry with them, would keep them so long in the little towns of his own district, that they would not have time to see Rome. I mentioned this, to put them on their guard. JOHNSON. "Sir, we do not thank Mr. Beauclerk for supposing that we are to be directed by Baretto. No, Sir, Mr. Thrale is to go by my advice, to Mr. Jackson, (the all-knowing,) and get from him a plan for seeing the most that can be seen in the time that we have to travel. We must, to be sure, see Rome, Naples, Florence, and Venice, and as much more as we can," (speaking with a tone of animation).

When I expressed an earnest wish for his remarks on Italy, he said, "I do not see that I could make a book upon Italy, yet I should be glad to get two hundred pounds, or five hundred pounds by such a work." This shewed both that a journal of his Tour upon the Continent was not wholly out of his contemplation, and that he uniformly adhered to that strange opinion, which his indolent disposition made him utter. "No man but a blockhead ever

See et Ad—On line 28 put the following note—"A gentleman who, from his extraordinary stores of knowledge, has been stiled *omniscient* Johnson, I think very properly, altered it to all-knowing, as it is a *verbum solenne*, appropriated to the Supreme Being."

wrote, except for money " Numerous instances to refute this will occur to all who are versed in the history of literature

He gave us one of the many sketches of character which were treasured in his mind, and which he was wont to produce quite unexpectedly in a very entertaining manner. "I lately (said he,) received a letter from the East-Indies, from a gentleman whom I formerly knew very well,¹ he had returned from that country with a handsome fortune, as it was reckoned, before means were found to acquire those immense sums which have been brought from thence of late, he was a scholar, and an agreeable man, and lived very prettily in London, till his wife died After her death, he took to dissipation and gaming, and lost all he had One evening he lost a thousand pounds to a gentleman whose name I am sorry I have forgotten Next morning he sent the gentleman five hundred pounds, with an apology that it was all he had in the world The gentleman sent the money back to him, declaring he would not accept it, and adding that if Mr —— had occasion for five hundred pounds more he would lend it to him He resolved to go out again to the East-Indies, and make his fortune anew He got a considerable appointment, and I had some intention of accompanying him Had I thought then as I do now, I should have gone but, at that time, I had objections to quitting England."

It was a very remarkable circumstance about Johnson, whom shallow observers have supposed to have been ignorant of the world, that very few men had seen greater variety of characters, and none could observe them better, as was evident from the strong, yet nice portraits which he often drew I have frequently thought that if he had made out what the French call *une catalogue raisonné* of all the people who had passed under his observation, it would have afforded a very rich fund of instruction and entertainment The suddenness with which his accounts of some of them started out in conversation, was not less pleasing than surprising I remember he once observed to me, "It is wonderful, Sir, what is to be found in London The most literary conversation that I ever enjoyed, was at the table of Jack Ellis, a money-scrivener behind the Royal-Exchange, with whom I at one period used to dine generally once a week."*

¹ This Mr Ellis is I believe, the last of that profession called Scriveners, which is one of the London companies, but of which the business is no longer carried on separately, but is transacted by attorneys and others He is a man of literature and talents He is the author of a Hudibrasick version of *Alphæus's Canto*, in au-

* Mr Joseph Fowler — See *Gent's Mag*, 1817, 526

Volumes would be required to contain a list of his numerous and various acquaintance, none of whom he ever forgot, and could describe and discriminate them all with precision and vivacity. He associated with persons the most widely different in manners, abilities, rank, and accomplishments.¹ He was at once the companion of the brilliant Colonel Forrester of the guards, who wrote "The Polite Philosopher," and of the awkward and uncouth Robert Levett, of Lord Thurlow, and Mr Sastres, the Italian master; and has dined one day with the beautiful, gay, and fascinating Lady Craven,² and the next with good Mrs. Gardiner the tallow-chandler, on Snow-hill.

On my expressing my wonder at his discovering so much of the knowledge peculiar to different professions, he told me, "I learnt what I know of law, chiefly from Mr Ballow, a very able man. I learnt some too from Chambers, but was not so teachable then. One is not willing to be taught by a young man." When I expressed a wish to know more about Mr Ballow, Johnson said, "Sir, I have seen him but once these twenty years. The tide of life has driven us different ways." I was sorry at the time to hear this, but whoever quits the creeks of private connections, and fairly gets into the great ocean of London, will, by imperceptible degrees, unavoidably experience this

transition to the *Æneid*, of some poems in Dodsley's collection, and various other small pieces, but being a very modest man, he never put his name to any thing. His shewn me a translation which he has made of Ovid's *Epistles*, very prettily done. There is a good engraved portrait of him by Peckel, from a picture by Fry, which hangs in the hall of the Serpenter's company. He is now a very old man. I have visited him this day (October 4, 1790,) in his ninety-third year, and found his judgment distinct and clear, and his memory, though faded so as to fail him occasionally, yet, as he assured me, and I indeed perceived, able to serve him very well, after a little recollection. It was agreeable to observe, that he was free from the discontent and fretfulness which too often molest old age. He in the summer of this year walked to Rotherhithe, where he died, and walked home in the evening.

Cor. et Ad.—Note above. Put the *past* instead of the *present* tense, and add, "He died on the 31st December, 1791."

* Lord Macartney, who with his other distinguished qualities, is remarkable also for an elegant pleasantry, told me, that he met Johnson at Lady Craven's, and that he seemed jealous of any interference, "So (said his Lordship, smiling,) I kept back."

Ibid.—Line 17. On "Ballow" put the following note—"There is an account of him in Sir John Hawkins's *Life of Johnson*."

Ibid.—Line 22. For "this" read, "such cessations of acquaintance."

¹ Mr Croker, after his fashion, disputes this very precise statement in a matter where Boswell had superior knowledge. He says that Johnson's polite acquaintance did not extend much beyond the circle of the Thrales, Reynolds, and the club. To any one well read in the vast collection of English memoirs, such an assertion will seem absurd. Mr

Rogers was told by Lady Lucan that her mother, Lady Spencer, used to say, "Now, child, we have nothing to do to-night, let us bring home Dr Johnson to dinner"—(*Table Talk*). This random instance is significant of a general familiarity with persons of consequence and fashion.

"My knowledge of physick, (he added,) I learnt from Dr James, whom I helped in writing the proposals for his Dictionary, and also a little in the Dictionary itself. I also learnt some from Dr. Lawrence, but was then grown more stubborn.

A curious incident happened to day, while Mr. Thrale and I sat with him. Francis announced that a large packet was brought to him from the post-office, said to have come from Lisbon, and it was charged *se en pounds ten shillings*. He would not receive it, supposing it to be some trick, nor did he even look at it. But upon enquiry afterwards he found that it was a real packet for him, from that very friend in the East Indies of whom he had been speaking, and the ship which carried it having come to Portugal, this packet, with others, had been put into the post office at Lisbon.

I mentioned a new gaming club,¹ of which Mr. Beauclerk had given me an account while the members played to a desperate extent. JOHNSON "Depend upon it, Sir, this is mere talk. *Who is ruined by gaming?* You will not find six instances in an age. There is a strange rout made about deep play, whereas you have many more people ruined by adventurous trade, and yet we do not hear such an outcry against it." THRALE "There may be few people absolutely ruined by deep play, but very many are much hurt in their circumstances by it." JOHNSON "Yes, Sir, and so are very many by other kinds of expence." I had heard him talk once before in the same manner, and at Oxford he said, "he wished he had learnt to play at cards. The truth, however, is, that he loved to display his ingenuity in argument, and therefore would sometimes in conversation maintain opinions which he was sensible were wrong, but in supporting which, his reasoning and wit would be most conspicuous. He would begin thus "Why, Sir, as to the good or evil of card playing—" "Now (said Garrick) he is thinking which side he shall take." He appeared to have a pleasure in contradiction, especially when any opinion whatever was delivered with an air of confidence, so that there was hardly any topick, if not one of the great truths of Religion and Morality, that he might not have been incited to argue, either for or against it. Lord Llibank² had the highest admiration of his powers. He once observed to me "Whatever opinion Johnson maintains, I will not say that he convinces me, but he never fails

¹ Patrick Lord Llibank who died 1778

² *Ibid* — I & J. On 'itself' put the following note — "I have in vain endeavoured to find out what parts Johnson wrote for Dr James. Perhaps medical men may "

¹ Almacks

to show me, that he has good reasons for it." I have heard Johnson pay his Lordship this high compliment "I never was in Lord Elibank's company without learning something"

We sat together till it was too late for the afternoon service. Thrale said, he had come with intention to go to church with us. We went at seven to evening prayers at St Clement's church, after having drank coffee, an indulgence, which I understood Johnson yielded to on this occasion, in compliment to Thrale

On Sunday, April 7, Easter-day, after having been at St Paul's cathedral, I came to Dr Johnson, according to my usual custom. It seemed to me, that there was always something peculiarly mild and placid in his manner upon this holy festival, the commemoration of the most joyful event in the history of our world, the resurrection of our LORD and SAVIOUR, who, having triumphed over death and the grave, proclaimed immortality to mankind

I repeated to him an argument of a lady of my acquaintance, who maintained, that her husband's having been guilty of numberless infidelities, released her from conjugal obligations, because they were reciprocal¹ JOHNSON. "This is miserable stuff, Sir. To the contract of marriage, besides the man and wife, there is a third party—Society, and, if it be considered as a vow—God—and, therefore, it cannot be dissolved by their consent alone. Laws are not made for particular cases, but for mankind in general. A woman may be unhappy with her husband, but she cannot be freed from him without the approbation of the civil and ecclesiastical power. A man may be unhappy, because he is not so rich as

¹ This was certainly the wife of Colonel James Stuart, a man of gallantry of the time. "The Honourable Mrs Stuart, in a pitty expressive manner, told me that she had fairly asked a respectable friend (sic) if he had ever been unfaithful to his wife, and that he answered, 'No, madam, never. I must not allow myself to run any risk of liking another woman better than my wife.' This she told me as an instance of exemplary fidelity, not without a sly reference to the licenses of her husband, the colonel, and myself. I turned it off, I think, with a pretty ingenious readiness. Said I, 'He has not been so certain of loving his wife as some others of us. We are so conscious of inviolable affection and regard, that we are not afraid of little risks.'" (*Boswelliana*, p. 14.) And again, "Lord Mountstuart said it was observed I was like Charles Fox. 'I have been told

so,' said I. 'You're much uglier,' said Colonel James Stuart with his sly drollery. I turned to him full as sly and as droll. 'Does your wife think so, Colonel James?'—(*Ibid*) "My intimacy with Mrs Stuart," he wrote to Temple, "is friendship, sister indeed to love—but such as I can never look foolish when her husband comes in, who perfectly understands us, and is happy that she is agreeably entertained when he is at his clubs." On one of these favoured occasions he dined with her, *elle-à-elle*. "She refused to be of a party at Richmond, that she and I might enjoy a farewell interview. We talked with unreserved freedom, as we had nothing to fear. We were philosophical, upon honour not deep, but feeling. We were pious, we drank tea and bid each other adieu as finely as romance paints." Such was the mercurial Boswell.

another, but he is not to seize upon another's property with his own hand.' BOSWELL "But Sir, this lady does not want that the contract should be dissolved, she only argues that she may indulge herself in gallantries with equal freedom as her husband does, provided she takes care not to introduce a spurious issue into his family. You know, Sir, what Macrobius has told us of Julia." JOHNSON "This lady of yours, Sir, I think, is very fit for a brothel."

Mr Macbean, author of the "Dictionary of ancient Geography," came in. He mentioned, that he had been forty years absent from Scotland. "Ah Boswell!" said Johnson, smiling, "what would you give to be forty years from Scotland?" I said, "I should not like to be so long absent from the seat of my ancestors." This gentleman, Mrs Williams, and Mr Levett, dined with us.

Dr Johnson made a remark which both Mr Macbean and I thought new. It was this, that "the law against usury is for the protection of creditors as well as of debtors, for if there were no such check, people would be apt from the temptation of great interest to lend to desperate persons, by whom they would lose their money. Accordingly there are instances of ladies being ruined, by having injudiciously sunk their fortunes for high annuities, which, after a few years, ceased to be paid, in consequence of the ruined circumstances of the borrower."

Mrs Williams was very peevish, and I wondered at Johnson's patience with her now, as I had often done on similar occasions. The truth is, that his humane consideration of the forlorn and indigent state in which this lady was left by her father, induced him to treat her with the utmost tenderness, and even to be desirous of procuring her amusement, so as sometimes to accommodate many of his friends by carrying her with him to their houses, where from her manner of eating, in consequence of her blindness, she could not but offend the delicacy of persons of nice sensations.

After coffee we went to afternoon service in St Clement's church. Observing some beggars in the street as we walked along, I said to him I supposed there was no civilised country in the world where the misery of want in the lowest classes of the people was prevented. JOHNSON "I believe Sir there is not, but it is better that some should be unhappy, than that none should be happy which would be the case in a general state of equality."

When the service was ended, I went home with him, and we sat quietly by ourselves. He recommended Dr Cheyne's books

said, I thought Cheyne had been reckoned whimsical — " So he was, (said he,) in some things, but there is no end of objections. There are few books to which some objection or other may not be made."

Upon the question whether a man who had been guilty of vicious actions would do well to force himself into solitude and sadness, JOHNSON " No, Sir, unless it prevent him from being vicious again. With some people, gloomy penitence is only madness turned upside down. A man may be gloomy, till, in order to be relieved from gloom, he has recourse again to criminal indulgences."

On Wednesday, April 10, I dined with him at Mr Thrale's, where were Mr Murphy and some other company. Before dinner, Dr Johnson and I passed some time by ourselves. I was sorry to find it was now resolved that the proposed journey to Italy should not take place this year. He said, " I am disappointed, to be sure, but it is not a great disappointment." I wondered to see him bear, with a philosophical calmness, what would have made most people peevish and fretful. I perceived, however, that he had so warmly cherished the hope of enjoying classical scenes, that he could not easily part with the scheme, for he said, " I shall probably contrive to get to Italy some other way. But I won't mention it to Mr and Mrs Thrale, as it might vex them." I suggested, that going to Italy might have done Mr and Mrs Thrale good. JOHNSON " I rather believe not, Sir. While grief is fresh, every attempt to divert only irritates. You must wait till grief be *digested*, and then amusement will dissipate the remains of it."

At dinner, Mr Murphy entertained us with the history of Mr. Joseph Simpson, a schoolfellow of Dr Johnson's, a barrister at law, of good parts, but who fell into a dissipated course of life, incompatible with that success in his profession which he once had, and would otherwise have deservedly maintained, yet he still preserved a dignity in his deportment. He wrote a tragedy on the story of Leonidas, entitled "The Patriot." He read it to a company of lawyers, who found so many faults, that he wrote it over again. So then there were two tragedies on the same subject, and with the same title. Dr Johnson told us, that one of them was still in his possession. This very piece was, after his death, published by some person who had been about him, and, for the sake of a little hasty profit, was positively averred to have been written by Johnson himself.

Cor et Ad—After line 3, *read*, "He added, 'I would not have you read any thing else of Cheyne, but his book on Health, and his "English Malady"'"

Ibid—Line 38. For "positively averred," read "fallaciously advertised so as to make it be believed."

I said, I disliked the custom which some people had of bringing their children into company, because it in a manner forced us to pay foolish compliments to please their parents. JOHNSON "You are right, Sir. We may be excused for not caring much about other people's children for there are many who care very little about their own children. It may be observed, that men, who from being engaged in business, or from their course of life in whatever way, seldom see their children, do not care much about them. I myself should not have had much fondness for a child of my own." MRS. THRAUF "Nay, Sir, how can you talk so?" JOHNSON. "At least, I never wished to have a child."

Mr Murphy mentioned Dr Johnson's having a design to publish an edition of Cowley. Johnson said he did not know but he should, and he expressed his disapprobation of Dr Hurd, for having published a mutilated edition under the title of "Select Works of Abraham Cowley." Mr Murphy thought it a bad precedent, observing, that any author might be used in the same manner, and that it was pleasing to see the variety of an author's compositions at different periods.

We talked of Flatman's Poems, and Mrs Thrauf observed, that Pope had partly borrowed from him "The dying Christian to his Soul." Johnson repeated Rochester's verses upon Flatman, which, I think, by much too severe

"Not that slow drudge in swift Pindarick strains,
Flatm in who Cowley imitates with puns
And rides a jaded Muse, whipt with loose reins."

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I like to recollect all the passages that I heard Johnson repeat. It stamps a value on them.

He told us that the book entitled *The Lives of the Poets*, by Mr Cibber, was entirely compiled by Mr Shiels, a Scotchman, one of his amanuenses. "The booksellers (said he,) gave Theophilus Cibber, who was then in prison, ten guineas, to allow *Mr. Cibber* to be put upon the title page as the authour, by this, a double imposition was intended in the first place, that it was the work of a Cibber at all, and, in the second place, that it was the work of old Cibber."

Cor et Ad—Line 36. On "Cibber" put the following note—"In the Monthly Review for May, 1792 there is a circumstantial statement which seems to prove in a satisfactory manner that Johnson was mistaken. It is to be observed, however, that the story told by Johnson does not rest solely upon my record of his conversation, &c." (as in next note)

Second Edition after line 36.—In the Monthly Review for May, 1792, there is such a correction of the above passage as I should think myself very culpable not to subjoin. "This account is very inaccurate. The following statement of facts will

Mr. Murphy said, that "The Memoirs of Gray's Life set him much higher in his estimation than his poems did, for you there saw a man constantly at work in literature Johnson acquiesced

know to be true, in every material circumstance —Shiels was the principal collector and digester of the materials for the work, but as he was very raw in authorship an indifferent writer in prose, and his language full of Scotticisms Cibber who was a clever, lively fellow, and then soliciting employment among the booksellers, was engaged to correct the style and diction of the whole work then intended to make only four volumes, with power to alter, expunge or add, as he liked He was also to supply notes, occasionally especially concerning those dramatic poets with whom he had been chiefly conversant He also engaged to write several of the Lives, which (as we are told) he accordingly promised He was further useful in striking out the Jacobinical and Tory sentiments, which Shiels had industriously interspersed wherever he could bring them in —and as the success of the work appeared after all very doubtful he was content with twenty one pounds for his labour besides a few sets of the books to dispose among his friends —Shiels had nearly seventy pounds, beside the advantage of many of the best Lives in the work being communicated by friends to the undertaking, and for which Mr Shiels had the same consideration as for the rest being paid by the sheet for the whole He was, however so weary with his Whitechapel supervisor (that like his father being a violent stickler for the political principles which prevailed in the reign of George the Second) for so unmercifully mutilating his copy and scolding his poetical friends that he wrote Cibber a challenge but was prevented from sending it, by the publisher, who fairly laughed him out of his fury The proprietors, too, were discontented, in the end, on account of Mr Cibber's unexpected industry for his corrections and alterations in the proof sheets were so numerous and considerable that the printer made for them a grievous addition to his bill and, in time, all parties were dissatisfied On the whole the work was productive of no profit to the undertakers, who had agreed in case of success, to make Cibber a present of some addition to the twenty guineas which he had received, and for which his receipt is now in the booksellers hands We are farther assured, that he actually obtained an additional sum, when he soon after (in the year 1758) unfortunately embarked for Dublin on an engagement for one of the theatres there but the ship was cast away, and every person on board perished There were about sixty passengers among whom was the Earl of Drogheda, with many other persons of consequence and property

As to the alleged design of making the complement pages for the work of old Mr Cibber, the charges seem to have been founded on a somewhat uncharitable construction We are assured that the thought was not harboured by some of the proprietors, who are still living and we hope that it did not occur to the first designer of the work, who was also the printer of it, and who bore a respectable character

"We have been induced to enter thus circumstantially into the foregoing detail of facts relating to the Lives of the Poets compiled by Messrs Cibber and Shiels, from a sincere regard to that sacred principle of Truth to which Dr Johnson so rigidly adhered, according to the best of his knowledge, and which we believe, no consideration would have prevailed on him to violate In regard to the matter, which we now dismiss, he had, no doubt, been misled by partial and wrong information Shiels was the Doctor's amanuensis he had quarrelled with Cibber, it is natural to suppose that he told his story in his own way, and it is certain that he was not 'a very sturdy moralist'" This explanation appears to me very satisfactory It is, however, to be observed that the story told by Johnson does not rest solely upon my record of his conversation, for he himself has published it in his life of Hammond, where he says, "the manuscript of Shiels is now in my possession" Very probably he had trusted to Shiels's word, and never looked at it so as to compare it with "The Lives of the Poets," as published under Mr Cibber's name What became of that manuscript I know not I should have liked much to examine it I suppose it was thrown into the fire in that impetuous combustion of papers, which Johnson I think rashly executed when *moribundus*

in this, but depreciated the book, I thought, very unreasonably. For he said "I forced myself to read it, only because it was a common topick of conversation. I found it mighty dull, and, as to the style, it is fit for the second table." Why he thought so, I was at a loss to conceive. He now gave it as his opinion, that "Alcibiades was a superior poet both to Gray and Mason."

Talking of the Reviews, Johnson said, "I think them very impartial. I do not know an instance of partiality." He mentioned what had passed upon the subject of the Monthly and Critical Reviews, in the conversation with which his Majesty had honoured him. He expatiated a little more on them this evening. "The Monthly Reviewers (said he) are not Deists, but they are Christians with as little Christianity as may be, and are for pulling down all establishments. The Critical Reviewers are for supporting the constitution, both in church and state. The Critical Reviewers, I believe, often review without reading the books through, but lay hold of a topick and write chiefly from their own minds. The Monthly Reviewers are duller men, and are glad to read the books through."

He talked of Lord Lyttelton's extreme anxiety as an authour, observing, that "he was thirty years in preparing his History, and that he employed a man to point it for him," as if (laughing) another man could point his sense better than himself. Mr Murphy said, he understood his History was kept back several years for fear of Smollet. JOHNSON "This seems strange to Murphy and me, who never felt that anxiety, but sent what we wrote to the press, and let it take its chance." MRS THRALI "The time has been, Sir, when you felt it." JOHNSON "Why really, Madam, I do not recollect a time when that was the case."

Talking of "The Spectator," he said, "It is wonderful that there is such a proportion of bad papers, in the half of the work which was not written by Addison, for there was all the world to write that half, yet not a half of that half is good. One of the finest pieces in the English language is the paper on Novelty, yet we do not hear it talked of. It was written by Grove, a dissenting teacher." He would not, I perceived, call him a *clergyman*, though he was candid enough to allow very great merit to his composition. Mr Murphy said, he remembered when there were several people alive in London, who enjoyed a considerable reputation merely from having written a paper in "The Spectator." He mentioned particularly Mr Ince, who used to frequent Tom's coffee-house. "But (said Johnson) you must consider how highly Steele speaks of Mr.

¹ "Yes, a cork cutter." 17. . . . *Marginalia.*

Ince" He would not allow that the paper on carrying a boy to travel, signed *Philip Homebred*, which was written by the Lord Chancellor Hardwick, had merit. He said, "it was quite vulgar, and had nothing luminous."

Johnson mentioned Dr Barry's "System of Physick." "He was a man (said he,) who had acquired a high reputation in Dublin, came over to England, and brought his reputation with him, but had not great success. His notion was, that pulsation occasions death by attrition, and that, therefore, the way to preserve life is to retard pulsation. But we know that pulsation is strongest in infants, and that we increase in growth while it operates in its regular course, so it cannot be the cause of destruction." Soon after this, he said something very flattering to Mrs Thrale, which I do not recollect, but it concluded with wishing her long life. "Sir, (said I,) if Dr Barry's system be true, you have now shortened Mrs Thrale's life, perhaps, some minutes by accelerating her pulsation."

On Thursday, April 11,¹ I dined with him at General Paoli's, in whose house I now resided, and where I had ever afterwards the honour of being entertained with the kindest attention as his constant guest, while I was in London, till I had a house of my own there. I mentioned my having that morning introduced to Mr. Garrick, Count Neri, a Flemish nobleman of great rank and fortune, to whom Garrick talked of Abel Drugger as a *small part*, and related, with pleasant vanity, that a Frenchman who had seen him in one of his low characters, exclaimed, "*Comment ! je ne le crois pas. Ce n'est pas, Monsieur Garrick, ce Grand Homme !*" Garrick added, with an appearance of grave recollection, "If I were to begin life again, I think I should not play those low characters."

¹ On this day Johnson took a step which shows that he considered he had rendered such substantial service to Government as to deserve further recognition. He did not communicate his application, and its result to his friend. His letter, which was found among Sir George Rose's papers, will be a surprise to readers of Boswell's Johnson.

"MY LORD,—Being wholly unknown to your Lordship, I have only this apology to make for presuming to trouble you with a request—that a stranger's petition, if it cannot be easily granted, can be easily refused. Some of the apartments are now vacant in which I am encouraged to hope that by application to your Lordship I may obtain a residence. Such a grant would be con-

sidered by me as a great favour, and I hope to a man who has had the honour of vindicating his Majesty's Government, a retreat in one of his houses may be not improperly or unworthily allowed. I therefore request that your Lordship will be pleased to grant such rooms in Hampton Court as shall seem proper to my Lord. Your Lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street,

"April 11, 1776"

It was thus answered, on 11th May — "LORD C presents his compliments to Mr Johnson, and is sorry that he cannot obey his commands, having already on his hands many engagements unsatisfied."

Upon which I observed, "Sir, you would be in the wrong, for your great excellence is your variety of playing, your representing so well, characters so very different." JOHNSON "Garrick, Sir, was not in earnest in what he said, for, to be sure, his peculiar excellence is his variety, and, perhaps, there is not any one character which has not been as well acted by somebody else, as he could do it." BOSWELL "Why then, Sir, did he talk so?" JOHNSON "Why, Sir, to make you answer as you did." BOSWELL "I don't know, Sir, he seemed to dip deep into his mind for the reflection." JOHNSON. "He had not far to dip, Sir he had said the same thing, probably, twenty times before."

Of a nobleman raised at a very early period to high office,¹ he said, "His parts, Sir, are pretty well for a Lord, but would not be distinguished in a man who had nothing else but his parts."

A journey to Italy was still in his thoughts. He said, "A man who has not been in Italy, is always conscious of an inferiority,—from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see. The grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. On those shores were the four great empires of the world, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman—All our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean." The General observed, that "THE MEDITERRANEAN would be a noble subject for a poem."

We talked of translation. I said, I could not define it, nor could I think of a similitude to illustrate it, but that it appeared to me the translation of poetry could be only imitation. JOHNSON "You may translate books of science exactly. You may also translate history, in so far as it is not embellished with oratory, which is poetical. Poetry, indeed, cannot be translated, and, therefore, it is the poets that preserve languages, for we would not be at the trouble to learn a language, if we could have all that is written in it just as well in a translation. But as the beauties of poetry cannot be preserved in any language except that in which it was originally written, we learn the language."

A gentleman maintained that the art of printing had hurt real learning, by disseminating idle writings—JOHNSON. "Sir, if it had not been for the art of printing, we should now have no learning at all, for books would have perished faster than they could have been transcribed." This observation seems not just, considering for how many ages books were preserved by writing alone.

¹ Mr Coker thinks the allusion is to Lord Shelburne, who was Secretary of

State when only twenty-nine

The same gentleman maintained, that a general diffusion of knowledge among a people was a disadvantage, for it made the vulgar rise above their humble sphere. JOHNSON. "Sir, while knowledge is a distinction, those who are possessed of it will naturally rise above those who are not. Merely to read and write was a distinction at first, but we see when reading and writing have become general, the common people keep their stations. And so, were higher attainments to become general, the effect would be the same."

"Goldsmith (he said,) referred every thing to vanity, his virtues, and his vices too, were from that motive. He was not a social man. He never exchanged mind with you."

We spent the evening at Mr Hoole's. Mr Mickle, the excellent translator of "The Lusiad," was there. I have preserved little of the conversation of this evening. Dr Johnson said, "Thomson had a true poetical genius, the power of viewing every thing in a poetical light. His fault is such a cloud of words sometimes, that the sense can hardly peep through. Shiels, who compiled 'Cibber's Lives of the Poets,' was one day sitting with me. I took down Thomson, and read aloud a large portion of him, and then asked,—Is not this fine? Shiels having expressed the highest admiration. Well, Sir, (said I,) I have omitted every other line."

I related a dispute between Goldsmith and Mr Robert Dodsley, one day when they and I were dining at Tom Davies's, in 1762. Goldsmith asserted, that there was no poetry produced in this age. Dodsley appealed to his own Collection, and maintained, that though you could not find a Palace like Dryden's "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day," you had villages composed of very pretty houses, and he mentioned particularly "The Spleen." JOHNSON. "I think Dodsley gave up the question. He and Goldsmith said the same thing; only he said it in a softer manner than Goldsmith did. for he acknowledged that there was no poetry, nothing that towered above the common mark. You may find wit and humour in verse, and yet no poetry. 'Hudibras' has a profusion of these, yet it is not to be reckoned a poem. 'The Spleen,' in Dodsley's collection, on which you say he chiefly rested, is not poetry." BOSWELL. "Does not Gray's poetry, Sir, tower above the common mark?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, but we must attend to the difference between what men in general cannot do if they would, and what every man may do if he would. Sixteen-string Jack towered above the common mark."

Cor et Ad—Line 40. On "Jack" put the following note—"A noted highway-man, who after having been several times tried and acquitted, was at last hanged. He was remarkable for loppiness in his dress, and particularly for wearing a bunch of sixteen strings at the knees of his breeches."

BOSWELL "Then, Sir, what is poetry?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it is much easier to say what it is not. We all *know* what light is, but it is not easy to *tell* what it is."

On Friday, April 12, I dined with him at our friend Tom Davies's, where we met Mr Cradock, a Leicestershire gentleman, authour of "Zobeide," a tragedy, and Dr Hatwood, who has written and published various works

I introduced Aristotle's doctrine in his "Art of Poetry," of "the *katharsis* τῶν παθημάτων, the purging of the passions," as the purpose of tragedy "But how are the passions to be purged by terrour and pity?" (said I, with an assumed air of ignorance, to incite him to talk, for which it was often necessary to employ some address). JOHNSON "Why, Sir, you are to consider what is the meaning of purging in the original sense It is to expel impurities from the human body The mind is subject to the same imperfection The passions are the great movers of human actions, but they are mixed with such impurities, that it is necessary they should be purged or refined by means of terrour and pity For instance, ambition is a noble passion, but by seeing upon the stage, that a man who is so excessively ambitious as to raise himself by injustice, is punished, we are terrified at the fatal consequences of such a passion In the same manner a certain degree of resentment is necessary, but if we see that a man carries it too far, we pity the object of it, and are taught to moderate that passion" My record upon this occasion does great injustice to Johnson's expression, which was so forcible and brilliant, that Mr Cradock whispered me, "O that his words were written in a book!"

I observed the great defect of the tragedy of "Othello" was, that it had not a moral, for that no man could resist the circumstances of suspicion which were artfully suggested to Othello's mind. JOHNSON "In the first place, Sir, we learn from Othello this very useful moral, not to make an unequal match, in the second place, we learn not to yield too readily to suspicion The handkerchief is merely a trick, though a very pretty trick, but there are no other circumstances of reasonable suspicion, except what is related by Iago of Cassio's warm expressions concerning Desdemona in his sleep, and that depended entirely upon the assertion of one

Cor et Ad—Line 5 After "Mr Cradock," read, "of Leicestershire, authour of 'Zobeide,' a tragedy, a very pleasing gentleman, to whom my friend Dr Farmer's very excellent Essay on the Learning Shakspeare is addressed"

Ibid—Line 7 After "works," read, "particularly a fantastical translation of the New Testament, in modern phrase, and with a Socinian twist"

Ibid—Line 10 On "tragedy" put the following note—"See an ingenious essay on this subject by the late Doctor Moot, Greek Professor at Glasgow"

man. No, Sir, I think Othello has more moral than almost any play."

Talking of a penurious gentleman of our acquaintance, Johnson said, "Sir, he is narrow, not so much from avarice, as from impotence to spend his money. He cannot find in his heart to pour out a bottle of wine, but he would not much care if it should sour."

He said, he wished to see "John Dennis's Critical Works" collected. Davies said they would not sell. Dr. Johnson seemed to think otherwise.

Davies said of a well known dramatick authour, that "he lived upon *potted stories*, and that he made his way as Hannibal did, by vinegar, having begun by attacking people, particularly the players."¹

He reminded Dr. Johnson of Mr. Murphy's having paid him the highest compliment that ever was paid to a layman, by asking his pardon for repeating some oaths in the course of telling a story.²

Johnson and I supped this evening at the Crown and Anchor tavern in company with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Langton, Mr. Nairne, now one of the Scotch Judges, with the title of Lord Dunsinane, and my very worthy friend, Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo.

We discussed the question whether drinking improved conversation and benevolence. Sir Joshua maintained it did. JOHNSON "No, Sir, before dinner men meet with great inequality of understanding, and those who are conscious of their inferiority, have the modesty not to talk. When they have drunk wine, every man feels himself happy, and loses that modesty, and grows impudent and vociferous, but he is not improved, he is only not sensible of his defects." Sir Joshua said that the Doctor was talking of the effects of excess in wine, but that a moderate glass enlivened the mind, by giving a proper circulation to the blood. "I am (said he,) in very good spirits when I get up in the morning. By dinner-time I am exhausted, wine puts me in the same state as when I got up, and I am sure that moderate drinking makes people talk better." JOHNSON "No, Sir, wine gives not light, gay, ideal hilarity, but tumultuous, noisy, clamorous merriment. I have heard none of

¹ Mr. Croker thinks that Murphy is alluded to here. This is likely, as Boswell immediately introduces his name in the next line. Murphy, too, though he had some quarrels with Garrick, did not attack the players. Colman is certainly intended.

² Mr. Craddock's account of the evening is as follows — "I first dined in company with Dr. Johnson at Mr

Davies' house in Russell-street, Covent-garden, as mentioned by Mr. Boswell, and the Doctor was that day all forbearance and civility. After dinner he looked about to see who left his company for the theatre, and at six o'clock there remained Mr. and Mrs. Davies, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Boswell, and Dr. Harwood, a Dissenter, who wrote the *harmony of the Gospels*."

those drunken—nay, drunken is a coarse word,—none of those vinous flights ' SIR JOSHUA "Because you have sat by, quite sober, and felt a envy of the happiness of those who were drinking" JOHNSON "Perhaps contempt—And, Sir, it is not necessary to be drunk one's self, to relish the wit of drunkenness. Do we not judge of the drunken wit of the dialogue between Iago and Cassio, the most excellent in its kind, when we are quite sober? Wit is wit, by whatever means it is produced, and, if good, will appear so at all times. I admit that the spirits are raised by drinking, as by the common participation of any pleasure, cock-fighting, or bear-baiting, will raise the spirits of a company as drinking does, though surely they will not improve conversation. I also admit, that there are some sluggish men who are improved by drinking, as there are fruits which are not good till they are rotten. There are such men, but they are meddlars. I indeed allow that there have been a very few men of talents who were improved by drinking, but I maintain that I am right as to the effects of drinking in general and let it be considered, that there is no position however false in its universality, which is not true of some particular man." SIR WILLIAM FORBES said, "Might not a man warmed with wine be like a bottle of beer which is made brisker by being set before the fire?"—

NA (said Johnson, laughing,) I cannot answer that. that is too much for me."

I observed, that wine did some people harm, by inflaming, confusing, and irritating their minds, but that the experience of mankind had declared in favour of moderate drinking. JOHNSON. 'Sir, I do not say it is wrong to produce self complacency by drinking, I only deny that it improves the mind. When I drank wine, I scorned to drink it when in company. I have drunk many a bottle by myself: in the first place, because I had need of it to raise my spirits, in the second place, because I would have nobody to witness its effects upon me.'

He told us, "almost all his *Ramblers* were written just as they were wanted for the press, that he sent a certain portion of the copy of an essay, and wrote the remainder, while the former part of it was printing. When it was wanted, and he had fairly sat down to it, he was sure it would be done."

He said, that for general improvement a man should read whatever his immediate inclination prompts him to, though, to be sure, if a man has a science to learn, he must regularly and resolutely advance. He added, "what we read with inclination makes a much stronger impression. If we read without inclination, half the mind is employed in fixing the attention, so there is but one half to be

employed on what we read " He told us, he read Fielding's "Amelia" through without stopping " He said, "if a man begins to read in the middle of a book, and feels an inclination to go on, let him not quit it, to go to the beginning He may, perhaps, not feel again the inclination "

Sir Joshua mentioned Mr Cumberland's Odes, which were just published JOHNSON "Why, Sir, they would have been thought as good as Odes commonly are, if Cumberland had not put his name to them; but a name immediately draws censure, unless it be a name that bears down every thing before it Nay, Cumberland has made his Odes subsidiary to the fame of another man " They might have run well enough by themselves, but he has not only loaded them with a name, but has made them carry double "

We talked of the Reviews, and Dr Johnson spoke of them as he did at Thrale's " Sir Joshua said, what I have often thought, that he wondered to find so much good writing employed in them, when the authours were to remain unknown, and so could not have the motive of fame JOHNSON "Nay, Sir, those who write in them, write well, in order to be paid well "

Soon after this day, he went to Bath with Mr and Mrs Thrale I had never seen that beautiful city, and wished to take the opportunity of visiting it, while Johnson was there. Having written to him, I received the following answer.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq

"DEAR SIR,—Why do you talk of neglect? When did I neglect you? If you will come to Bath, we shall all be glad to see you. Come, therefore, as soon as you can

"But I have a little business for you at London. Bid Francis look in the paper-drawer of the chest of drawers in my bed-chamber for two cases, one for the Attorney-General, and one for the Solicitor General They lie, I think, at the top of my papers, otherwise they are somewhere else, and will give me more trouble.

"Please to write me immediately, if they can be found Make my compliments to all our friends round the world, and to Mrs Williams at home.

"I am, Sir, your, &c

"SAM JOHNSON.

"Search for the papers as soon as you can, that, if it is necessary, I may write to you again before you come down."

^a We have here an involuntary testimony to the excellence of this admirable writer, to whom we have seen that Dr Johnson *directly* allowed so little merit

^b Mr Romney the painter, who has now deservedly established a high reputation.

^c Page 120 of this volume.

On the 26th of April, I went to Bath, and on my arrival at the Pelican inn, found lying for me an obliging invitation from Mr and Mrs Thrale, by whom I was agreeably entertained almost constantly during my stay.¹ They were gone to the rooms, but there was a kind note from Dr Johnson, that he should sit at home all the evening. I went to him directly, and before Mr and Mrs Thrale returned, we had by ourselves some hours of tea-drinking and talk.

I shall group together such of his sayings as I preserved during the few days that I was at Bath.

Of a person who differed from him in politics, he said, "In private life he is a very honest gentleman, but I will not allow him to be so in public life. People *may* be honest, though they are doing wrong: that is between their Maker and them. But *we*, who are suffering by their pernicious conduct, are to destroy them. We are sure that ——— acts from interest. We know what his genuine principles were. They who allow their passions to confound the distinctions between right and wrong, are criminal. They may be convinced, but they have not come honestly by their conviction."

It having been mentioned, I know not with what truth, that a certain female political writer,² whose doctrines he disliked, had of late become very fond of dress, sat hours together at her toilet, and even put on rouge,—JOHNSON "She is better employed at her toilet than using her pen. It is better she should be reddening her own cheeks, than blackening other people's characters."

He told us that "Addison wrote Budgell's papers in the Spectator, at least mended them so much, that he made them almost all his own, and that Draper, Tonson's partner, assured Mrs Johnson, that the much admired Epilogue to 'The Distressed Mother,' which came out in Budgell's name, was in reality written by Addison."

"The mode of government by one may be ill adapted to a small society, but is best for a great nation. The characteristic of our own government at present is imbecility. The magistrates dare not call the guards for fear of being hanged. The guards will not come, for fear of being given up to the blind rage of popular juries."

Of the father of one of our friends, he observed, "He never

¹ He was delighted with Bath, "that most elegant city. I came down on Friday in the stage chaise or *Diligence*, and had by chance two very agreeable ladies for companions. I lie at an

inn, but am with them (the Thrales) all day."—*Letters to Temple*.

² No doubt Mrs Macaulay.

³ Mr Langton, sen.

clarified his notions, by filtrating them through other minds. He had a canal upon his estate, where at one place the bank was too low—I dug the canal deeper," said he.

He told me that "so long ago as 1748, he had read 'The Grave, a Poem,'^a but did not like it much." I differed from him, for though it is not equal throughout, and is seldom elegantly correct, it abounds in solemn thought, and poetical imagery beyond the common reach. The world has differed from him, for the poem has passed through many editions and is still much read by people of a serious cast of mind.

A literary lady of large fortune was mentioned, as one who did good to many, but by no means "by stealth," and instead of "blushing to find it fame," acted evidently from vanity. JOHNSON. "I have seen no beings who do as much good from benevolence, as she does, from whatever motive. If there are such under the earth, or in the clouds, I wish they would come up, or come down. What Soame Jennyns says upon this subject is not to be minded, he is a wit. No, Sir, to act from pure benevolence is not possible for finite beings. Human benevolence is mingled with vanity, interest, or some other motive."

He would not allow me to praise a lady then at Bath, observing, "She does not gain upon me, Sir, I think her empty-headed." He was, indeed, a stern critic upon characters and manners. Even Mrs. Thrale did not escape his friendly animadversion at times. When he and I were one day endeavouring to ascertain, article by article, how one of our friends could possibly spend as much money in his family as he told us he did, she interrupted us with a lively extravagant sally, on the expence of clothing his children, describing it in a very ludicrous and fanciful manner. Johnson looked a little angry, and said, "Nay, Madam, when you are declaiming, declaim, and when you are calculating, calculate." At another time, when she said, perhaps affectedly, "I don't like to fly," JOHNSON. "With *your* wings, Madam, you *must* fly. but have a care, there are *clippers* abroad." How very well was this said, and how fully has experience proved the truth of it! But have they not *clipped* rather *rudely*, and gone a great deal *closer* than was necessary?

^a I am sorry that there are no memoirs of the Reverend Robert Blair, the author of this poem. He was the representative of the ancient family of Blair, of Blair in Ayrshire, but the estate had descended to a female, and afterwards passed to the son of her husband by another marriage. He was minister of the parish of Athelstaneford, where Mr. John Home was his successor, so that it may be truly called classic ground. His son, who is of the same name, and a man eminent for talents and learning, is now, with universal approbation, Solicitor-General of Scotland.

A gentleman expressed a wish to go and live three years at Otaheite, or New Zealand, in order to obtain a full acquaintance with people, so totally different from all that we have ever known, and be satisfied what pure nature can do for man JOHNSON. "What could you learn, Sir? What can savages tell, but what they themselves have seen? Of the past, or the invisible, they can tell nothing The inhabitants of Otaheite and New Zealand are not in a state of pure nature, for it is plain they broke off from some other people Had they grown out of the ground, you might have judged of a state of pure nature Fanciful people may talk of a mythology being amongst them, but it must be invention They have once had religion, which has been gradually debased And what account of their religion can you suppose to be learnt from savages? Only consider, Sir, our own state Our religion is in a book, we have an order of men whose duty it is to teach it, we have one day in the week set apart for it, and this in general pretty well observed Yet ask the first ten gross men you meet, and hear what they can tell of their religion."

On Monday, April 29, he and I made an excursion to Bristol, where I was entertained with seeing him inquire upon the spot, into the authenticity of "*Rowley's Poetry*," as I had seen him inquire upon the spot into the authenticity of "*Ossian's Poetry*." George Catcot, the pewterer, who was as zealous for Rowley, as Dr Hugh Blair was for Ossian, (I trust my Reverend friend will excuse the comparison,) attended us at our inn, and with a triumphant air of lively simplicity called out, "I'll make Dr. Johnson a convert." Dr Johnson, at his desire, read aloud some of Chatterton's fabricated verses, while Catcot stood at the back of his chair, moving himself like a pendulum, and beating time with his feet, and now and then looking into Dr. Johnson's face, wondering that he was not yet convinced. We called on Mr. Bairet, the surgeon, and saw some of the *originals* as they were called, which were executed very artificially, but from a careful inspection of them, and a consideration of the circumstances with which they were attended, we were quite satisfied of the imposture, which, indeed, has been clearly demonstrated from internal evidence, by several able critics.*

Honest Catcot seemed to pay no attention whatever to any objections, but insisted, as an end of all controversy, that we should go with him to the tower of the church of St Mary, Redcliff, and *view with our own eyes* the ancient chest in which the manuscripts

* Mr Tyrwhitt, Mr Warton, Mr Malone

were found To this, Dr Johnson good-naturedly agreed, and though troubled with a shortness of breathing, laboured up a long flight of steps, till we came to the place where the wondrous chest stood. "*There*, (said Catcot, with a bouncing confident credulity,) *there* is the very chest itself." After this *ocular demonstration*, there was no more to be said He brought to my recollection a Scotch Highlander, a man of learning too, and who had seen the world, attesting, and at the same time giving his reasons for the authenticity of Fingal — "I have heard all that poem when I was young."—"Have you, Sir? Pray what have you heard?"—"I have heard Ossian, Oscar, and *every one of them* "

Johnson said of Chatterton, "This is the most extraordinary young man that has encountered my knowledge. It is wonderful how the whelp has written such things "

We were by no means pleased with our inn at Bristol. "Let us see now, (said I,) how we should describe it." Johnson was ready with his raillery "Describe it, Sir?—Why, it was so bad that Boswell wished to be in Scotland!"

After Dr Johnson's return to London, I was several times with him at his house, where I occasionally slept, in the room that had been assigned to me I dined with him at Dr Taylor's, at General Oglethorpe's, and at General Paoli's ¹ To avoid a tedious minuteness, I shall groupe together what I have preserved of his conversation during this period also, without specifying each scene where it passed, except one, which will be found so remarkable as certainly to deserve a very particular relation Where the place or the persons do not contribute to the zest of the conversation, it is unnecessary to encumber my page with mentioning them To know of what vintage our wine is, enables us to judge of its value, and to drink it with more relish but to have the produce of each vine of one vineyard, in the same year, kept separate, would serve no purpose To know that our wine (to use an advertising phrase,) is "of the stock of an Ambassadors lately deceased," heightens its flavour. but it signifies nothing to know the bin where each bottle was once deposited.

"Garrick (he observed,) does not play the part of Archer in 'The Beaux Stratagem' well The gentleman should break out² through the footman, which is not the case as he does it "

"Where there is no education, as in savage countries, men will

¹ Boswell was at this time making a collection of the general's *Memorabilia* Some of these, given in the letters to Temple, are graceful and witty, as when

he was told that Home was dying "*Ah je suis fâché qu'il soit détrompé si tôt!*" Boswell was now "eating his terms" for the English bar. ² *Dele* "out."

have the upper hand of women Bodily strength, no doubt, contributes to this but it would be so, exclusive of that, for it is mind that always governs When it comes to dry understanding, man has the better "

"The little volumes entitled '*Respublicæ*,' which are very well done, were a bookseller's work "

"There is much talk of the misery which we cause to the brute creation, but they are recompensed by existence If they were not useful to man, and therefore protected by him, they would not be nearly so numerous " This argument is to be found in the able and benignant Hutchinson's "*Moral Philosophy* " But the question is, whether the animals who endure such sufferings of various kinds, for the service and entertainment of man, would accept of existence upon the terms on which they have it Madame Sevigné, who, though she had many enjoyments, felt with delicate sensibility the prevalence of misery, complains of the task of existence having been imposed upon her without her consent.

"That man is never happy for the present is so true, that all his relief from unhappiness is only forgetting himself for a little while Life is a progress from want to want, not from enjoyment to enjoyment."

"*Though many men are nominally entrusted with the administration of hospitals and other publick institutions, almost all the good is done by one man, by whom the rest are driven on, owing to confidence in him, and indolence in them.*"

"Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his son, I think, might be made a very pretty book Take out the immorality, and it should be put into the hands of every young gentleman An elegant manner and easiness of behaviour are acquired gradually and imperceptibly No man can say, 'I'll be genteel' There are ten genteel women for one genteel man, because they are more restrained A man without some degree of restraint is insufferable, but we are all less restrained than women Were a woman sitting in company to put out her legs before her as most men do, we should be tempted to kick them in."

No man was a more attentive and nice observer of behaviour in those in whose company he happened to be, than Johnson, or, however strange it may seem to many, had a higher estimation of its refinements Lord Eliot informs me, that one day when Johnson and he were at dinner at a gentleman's house in London, upon Lord Chesterfield's Letters being mentioned, Johnson surprised the company by this sentence "Every man of any education would rather be called a rascal, than accused of deficiency

in the *graces* " Mr. Gibbon, who was present, turned to a lady who knew Johnson well and lived much with him, and in his quaint manner, tapping his box, addressed her thus "Don't you think, Madam, (looking towards Johnson,) that among *all* your acquaintance you could find *one* exception?" The lady smiled, and seemed to acquiesce

"I read (said he) Sharpe's letters on Italy,¹ over again when I was at Bath There is a great deal of matter in them "

"Mrs Williams was angry that Thrale's family did not send regularly to her every time they heard from me while I was in the Hebrides Little people are apt to be jealous but they should not be jealous, for they ought to consider, that superiour attention will necessarily be paid to superiour fortune or rank. Two persons may have equal merit, and on that account may have an equal claim to attention, but one of them may have also fortune and rank, and so may have a double claim "

Talking of his notes on Shakspeare, he said, "I depise those who do not see that I am right in the passage where *as* is repeated, and 'asses of great charge' introduced That on 'To be, or not to be,' is disputable "

A gentleman, whom I found sitting with him one morning, said, that in his opinion the character of an infidel was more detestable than that of a man notoriously guilty of an atrocious crime I differed from him, because we are surer of the odiousness of the one, than of the cirour of the other JOHNSON "Sir, I agree with him, for the infidel would be guilty of any crime if he were inclined to it "

"Many things which are false are transmitted from book to book, and gain credit in the world One of these is the cry against the evil of luxury Now the truth is, that luxury produces much good. Take the luxury of building in London Does it not produce real advantage in the conveniency and elegance of accommodation, and this all from the exertion of industry? People will tell you, with a melancholy face, how many builders are in gaol It is plain they are in gaol, not for building, for rents are not fallen —A man gives half a guinea for a dish of green peas How much gardening does this occasion? how many labourers must the competition to have

^a It may be observed, that Mr Malone, in his very valuable edition of Shakspeare, has fully vindicated Dr Johnson from the idle censures which the first of these notes has given rise to The interpretation of the other passage, which Dr Johnson allows to be *disputable*, he has clearly shewn to be erroneous

¹ He is the traveller alluded to in *dungus*, Smollett being described as "The Sentimental Journey" as *Mun- Smelsingus*

such things early in the market keep in employment? You will hear it said, very gravely, 'Why was not the half-guinea, thus spent in luxury given to the poor? To how many might it have afforded a good meal?' Alas! has it not gone to the *industrious* poor whom it is better to support than the *idle* poor? You are much surer that you are doing good when you *pay* money to those who work as the recompence of their labour, than when you *give* money *merely* in charity. Suppose the ancient luxury of a dish of peacock's brains were to be revived, how many carcasses would be left to the poor at a cheap rate? And as to the rout that is made about people who are ruined by extravagance, it is no matter to the nation that some individuals suffer. When so much general productive exertion is the consequence of luxury, the nation does not care though there are debtors in gaol, nay, they would not care though their creditors were there too.

The uncommon vivacity of General Oglethorpe's mind, and variety of knowledge, having sometimes made his conversation seem too desultory, Johnson observed, "Oglethorpe, Sir, never *completes* what he has to say.

When I complained of having dined at a splendid table without hearing one sentence of conversation worthy of being remembered, he said "Sir, there seldom is any such conversation." BOSWELL "Why then meet at table?" JOHNSON "Why to eat and drink together, and promote kindness: and Sir, this is better done when there is no solid conversation: for when there is, people differ in opinion, and get into bad humour: or some of the company who are not capable of such conversation are left out and feel themselves uneasy. It was for this reason, Sir Robert Walpole said he always talked bawdy at his table: because in that all could join.

Being irritated by hearing a gentleman¹ ask Mr. Levett a variety of questions concerning him, when he was sitting by he broke out "Sir, you have but two topics yourself and me. I am sick of both."—"A man (said he) should not talk of himself, nor much of any particular person. He should take care not to be made a proverb, and therefore, should avoid having any one topick of which people can say, 'We shall hear him upon it.' There was a Dr. Oldfield, who was always talking of the Duke of Marlborough. He came into a coffee house one day and told that his Grace had spoken in the House of Lords for half an hour. 'Did he indeed

Cor. et Ad.—At line 19 read 'He on the same account made a similar remark on Faint's libel.' Sir, there is nothing *cor. lucre* in his talk.

¹ No doubt Boswell himself.

speak for half an hour ? ' (said Belchier the surgeon) — ' Yes ' — ' And what did he say of Dr. Oldfield ? ' — ' Nothing ' — ' Why then, Sir, he was very ungrateful, for Dr Oldfield could not have spoken for a quarter of an hour without saying something of him ' "

" Every man is to take existence on the terms on which it is given to him To some men it is given on condition of not taking liberties, which other men may take without much harm One man may drink wine and be nothing the worse for it, on another wine may have effects so inflammatory as to injure him both in body and mind, and perhaps make him commit something for which he may deserve to be hanged "

" Lord Hailes's 'Annals of Scotland' have not that pointed form which is the taste of this age, but it is a book which will always sell, it has such a stability of dates, such a certainty of facts, and such a punctuality of citation. I never before read Scotch history with certainty "

I asked him whether he would advise me to read the Bible with a commentary, and what commentaries he would recommend JOHNSON " To be sure, Sir, I would have you read the Bible with a commentary, and I would recommend Lowth and Patrick on the Old Testament, and Hammond on the New "

During my stay in London this spring, I solicited his attention to another law case, in which I was engaged In the course of a contested election for the borough of Dunfermline, which I attended, as one of my friend Colonel (now Sir Archibald) Campbell's counsel, a man, one of his political agents, who was charged with having been unfaithful to his employer, and having deserted to the opposite party for a pecuniary reward—attacked very rudely in a newspaper the Rev Mr James Thomson, one of the ministers of that place, on account of a supposed allusion to him in one of his sermons Upon this the minister, on a subsequent Sunday, arraigned him by name from the pulpit with some severity, and the agent, after the sermon was over, rose up and asked the minister aloud, " What bribe he had received for telling so many lies from the chair of veracity " I was present at this very extraordinary scene. The person arraigned, and his father and brother, who had also had a share both of the reproof from the pulpit, and in the retaliation, brought an action against Mr Thomson, in the Court of Session, for defamation and damages, and I was one of the counsel for the reverend defendant. *The Liberty of the Pulpit* was our great ground of defence; but we argued also on the provocation of the previous attack, and on the instant retaliation. The Court of Session, however, the fifteen Judges, who are at the

same time the jury, decided against the minister, contrary to my humble opinion, and several of them expressed themselves with indignation against him. He was an aged gentleman, formerly a military chaplain, and a man of high spirit and honour. Johnson was satisfied that the judgement was wrong, and dictated to me the following argument in confutation of it :

“ Or the censure pronounced from the pulpit, our determination must be formed, as in other cases, by a consideration of the action itself and the particular circumstances with which it is invested

“ The right of censure and rebuke seems necessarily appendant to the pastoral office. He, to whom the care of a congregation is entrusted, is considered as the shepherd of a flock, as the teacher of a school, as the father of a family. As a shepherd tending not his own sheep but those of his master, he is answerable for those that stray, and that lose themselves by straying. But no man can be answerable for losses which he has not power to prevent, or for vagrancy which he has not authority to restrain

“ As a teacher giving instruction for wages, and liable to reproach if those whom he undertakes to inform make no proficiency, he must have the power of enforcing attendance, of awakening negligence, and repressing contradiction.

“ As a father, he possesses the paternal authority of admonition, rebuke, and punishment. He cannot, without reducing his office to an empty name, be hindered from the exercise of any practice necessary to stimulate the idle, to reform the vicious, to check the petulant, and correct the stubborn

“ If we enquire into the practice of the primitive church, we shall, I believe, find the ministers of the Word exercising the whole authority of this complicated character. We shall find them not only encouraging the good by exhortation, but terrifying the wicked by reproof and denunciation. In the earliest ages of the Church, while religion was yet pure from secular advantages, the punishment of sinners was publick censure, and open penance, penalties inflicted merely by ecclesiastical authority, at a time while the church had yet no help from the civil power, while the hand of the magistrate lifted only the rod of persecution, and when governours were ready to afford a refuge to all those who fled from clerical authority

“ That the Church, therefore, had once a power of publick censure is evident, because that power was frequently exercised. That it borrowed not its power from the civil authority, is likewise certain, because civil authority was at that time its enemy.

"The hour came at length, when after three hundred years of struggle and distress, Truth took possession of imperial power, and the civil laws lent their aid to the ecclesiastical constitutions. The magistrate from that time co-operated with the priest, and clerical sentences were made efficacious by secular force. But the State, when it came to the assistance of the Church, had no intention to diminish its authority. Those rebukes and those censures which were lawful before, were lawful still. But they had hitherto operated only upon voluntary submission. The refractory and contemptuous were at first in no danger of temporal severities, except what they might suffer from the reproaches of conscience, or the detestation of their fellow Christians. When religion obtained the support of law, if admonitions and censures had no effect, they were seconded by the magistrates with coercion and punishment.

"It therefore appears from ecclesiastical history, that the right of inflicting shame by publick censure, has been always considered as inherent in the Church, and that this right was not conferred by the civil power, for, it was exercised when the civil power operated against it. By the civil power it was never taken away, for the Christian magistrate interposed his office not to rescue sinners from censure, but to supply more powerful means of reformation, to add pain where shame was insufficient, and when men were proclaimed unworthy of the society of the faithful, to restrain them by imprisonment, from spreading abroad the contagion of wickedness.

"It is not improbable that from this acknowledged power of publick censure, grew in time the practice of auricular confession. Those who dreaded the blast of publick reprehension, were willing to submit themselves to the priest, by a private accusation of themselves, and to obtain a reconciliation with the Church by a kind of clandestine absolution and invisible penance; conditions with which the priest would in times of ignorance and corruption easily comply, as they increased his influence, by adding the knowledge of secret sins to that of notorious offences, and enlarged his authority, by making him the sole arbiter of the terms of reconciliation.

"From this bondage the Reformation set us free. The minister has no longer power to press into the retirements of conscience, to torture us by interrogatories, or put himself in possession of our secrets and our lives. But though we have thus controuled his usurpations, his just and original power remains unimpaired. He may still see, though he may not pry; he may yet hear, though he may not question. And that knowledge which his eyes and ears force upon him it is still his duty to use for the benefit of his flock. A father who lives near a wicked neighbour, may forbid a son to

frequent his company. A minister who has in his congregation a man of open and scandalous wickedness, may warn his parishioners to shun his conversation. To warn them is not only lawful, but not to warn them would be criminal. He may warn them one by one in friendly converse, or by a pastoral visitation. But if he may warn each man singly, what shall forbid him to warn them all together? Of that which is to be made known to all, how is there any difference whether it be communicated to each singly, or to all together? What is known to all, must necessarily be publick. Whether it shall be publick at once, or publick by degrees, is the only question. And of a sudden and solemn publication the impression is deeper, and the warning more effectual.

"It may easily be argued, if a minister be thus left at liberty to delate sinners from the pulpit, and to publish at will the crimes of a parishioner, he may often blast the innocent, and distress the timorous. He may be suspicious, and condemn without evidence, he may be rash, and judge without examination, he may be severe, and treat slight offences with too much harshness, he may be malignant and partial, and gratify his private interest or resentment, under the shelter of his pastoral character.

"Of all this there is possibility, and of all this there is danger. But if possibility of evil be to exclude good, no good ever can be done. If nothing is to be attempted in which there is danger, we must all sink into hopeless inactivity. The evils that may be feared from this practice arise not from any defect in the institution, but from the infirmities of human nature. Power, in whatever hands it is placed, will be sometimes improperly exerted, yet courts of law must judge though they will sometimes judge amiss. A father must instruct his children, though he himself may often want instruction. A minister must censure sinners, though his censure may be sometimes erroneous by want of judgement, and sometimes unjust by want of honesty.

"If we examine the circumstances of the present case, we shall find the sentence neither erroneous nor unjust, we shall find no breach of private confidence, no intrusion into secret transactions. The fact was notorious and indubitable, so easy to be proved, that no proof was desired. The act was base and treacherous, the perpetration insolent and open, and the example naturally mischievous. The minister, however, being retired and recluse, had not yet heard what was publickly known throughout the parish, and on occasion of a publick election, warned his people, according to his duty, against the crimes which publick elections frequently produce. His warning was felt by one of his parishioners, as

pointed particularly at himself. But instead of producing as might be wished, private compunction and immediate reformation, it kindled only rage and resentment. He charged his minister, in a publick paper, with scandal, defamation and falsehood. The minister, thus reproached, had his own character to vindicate, upon which his pastoral authority must necessarily depend. To be charged with a defamatory lie is an injury which no man patiently endures in common life. To be charged with polluting the pastoral office with scandal and falsehood was a violation of character still more atrocious, as it affected not only his personal but his clerical veracity. His indignation naturally rose in proportion to his honesty, and with all the fortitude of injured honesty, he dared this calumniator in the church, and at once exonerated himself from censure, and rescued his flock from deception and from danger. The man whom he accuses pretends not to be innocent, or at least only pretends, for he declines a trial. The crime of which he is accused has frequent opportunities and strong temptations. It has already spread far, with much depravation of private morals, and much injury to publick happiness. To warn the people, therefore, against it was not wanton and officious, but necessary and pastoral.

"What then is the fault with which this worthy minister is charged? He has usurped no dominion over conscience. He has exerted no authority in support of doubtful and controverted opinions. He has not dragged into light a bashful and corrigible sinner. His censure was directed against a breach of morality, against an act which no man justifies. The man who appropriated this censure to himself, is evidently and notoriously guilty. His consciousness of his own wickedness incited him to attack his faithful reprover with open insolence and painted accusations. Such an attack made defence necessary, and we hope it will be at last decided that the means of defence were just and lawful."

When I read this to Mr Burke, he was highly pleased, and exclaimed, "Well, he does his work in a workman like manner!"^a

Mr Thomson wished to bring the cause by appeal before the House of Lords, but was dissuaded by the advice of the noble person who now presides so ably in that Most Honourable House, and who was then Attorney-General. As my readers will no doubt

^a As a proof of Dr Johnson's extraordinary powers of composition, it appears from the original manuscript of this excellent dissertation, of which he dictated the first eight paragraphs on the 10th of May, and the remainder on the 13th, that there are in the whole only seven corrections, or rather variations, and those not considerable. Such were at once the vigorous and accurate emanations of his mind.

Cor et Ad—Line 29 for "painted" read "printed."

be glad also to read the opinion of this eminent man upon the same subject, I shall here insert it

CASE

"THERE is herewith laid before you,

' 1 Petition for the Reverend Mr James Thomson,
minister of Dunfermline

' 2 Answers thereto

' 3 Copy of the judgement of the Court of Session
upon both

' 4 Notes of the opinions of the Judges, being the
reasons upon which their decree is grounded.

"These papers you will please to peruse, and give your opinion

"Whether there is a probability of the above decree
of the Court of Session's being reversed, if Mr.
Thomson should appeal from the same?"

"I don't think the appeal adviseable, not only because the value of the judgement is in no degree adequate to the expence, but because there are many chances, that, upon the general complexion of the case, the impression will be taken to the disadvantage of the appellants

"It is impossible to approve the style of that sermon. But the complaint was not less ungracious from that man, who had behaved so ill by his original libel, and, at the time, when he received the reproach he complains of. In the last article all the plaintiffs are equally concerned. It struck me also with some wonder, that the Judges should think so much fervour apposite to the occasion of reproving the defendant for a little excess.

"Upon the matter, however, I agree with them in condemning the behaviour of the minister, and in thinking it a subject fit for ecclesiastical censure, and even for an action, if any individual could qualify a wrong, and a damage arising from it. But this I doubt. The circumstance of publishing the reproach in a pulpit, though extremely indecent, and culpable in another view, does not constitute a different sort of wrong, or any other rule of law, than would have obtained, if the same words had been pronounced elsewhere. I don't know, whether there be any difference in the law of Scotland, in the definition of slander, before the Commissaries, or the Court of Session. The common law of England does not give

* It is curious to observe that Lord Thurlow has here perhaps in compliment to North-Britain, made use of a term of the Scotch law, which to an English reader may require explanation. To *qualify* a wrong, is to point out and establish it.

way to actions for every reproachful word. An action cannot be brought for general damages, upon any words which import less than an offence cognisable by law, consequently no action could have been brought here for the words in question. Both laws admit the truth to be a justification in actions *for words*, and the law of England does the same in actions for libels. The judgement, therefore, seems to me to have been wrong, in that the Court repelled that defence.

“E THURLOW.”

I am now to record a very curious incident in Dr. Johnson's Life, which fell under my own observation, of which *pars magna fui*, and which I am persuaded will, with the liberal-minded, be much to his credit.

My desire of being acquainted with celebrated men of every description, had made me, much about the same time, obtain an introduction to Dr. Samuel Johnson and to John Wilkes, Esq. Two men more different could perhaps not be selected out from all mankind. They had even attacked one another with some asperity in their writings,¹ yet I lived in habits of friendship with both.² I could fully relish the excellence of each, for I have ever delighted in that intellectual chymistry which can separate good qualities from evil in the same person.

Sir John Pringle, “mine own friend and my Father's friend,” between whom and Dr. Johnson I in vain wished to establish an acquaintance, as I respected and lived in intimacy with both of them, observed to me once, very ingeniously, “It is not in friendship as in mathematicks, where two things, each equal to a third, are equal between themselves. You agree with Johnson as a middle quality, and you agree with me as a middle quality, but Johnson and I should not agree.” Sir John was not sufficiently flexible, so I desisted, knowing, indeed, that the repulsion was equally strong on the part of Johnson, who, I know not from what cause, unless his being a Scotchman, had formed a very erroneous opinion of Sir John. But I conceived an irresistible wish, if possible, to bring

¹ Johnson's pension had been severely dealt with in the *North Briton*.

² This intimacy with Wilkes, which was of the most cordial kind, is evidence that Mr. Boswell was what is called a good fellow and good company. Wilkes was lord mayor the year before (1775), and Boswell had applied to him to authenticate a pedigree of the family, for transmission to David Boswell in Spain.

Wilkes wrote in reply “I expect, in half an hour, a score of worthy liveries, friends of Wilkes and liberty, whom so liberal a Scot as you would rejoice to hear and make libations with. My company are just arrived. Mr. Boswell in a bumper—hurra! hurra! hurra!” These were convivial meetings together—dinners arranged at the Crown and Anchor

Dr Johnson and Mr Wilkes together. How to manage it, was a nice and difficult matter

My worthy booksellers and friends, Messieurs Dillys in the Poultry, at whose hospitable and well-covered table I have seen a greater number of literary men than at any other, except that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, had invited me to meet Mr Wilkes and some more gentlemen on Wednesday, May 15 "Pray (said I,) let us have Dr. Johnson"—"What, with Mr Wilkes? not for the world, (said Mr. Edward Dilly) Dr. Johnson would never forgive me"—"Come, (said I,) if you'll let me negotiate for you, I will be answerable that all shall go well" DILLY "Nay, if you will take it upon you, I am sure I shall be very happy to see them both here"

Notwithstanding the high veneration which I entertained for Dr Johnson, I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction, and by means of that I hoped I should gain my point I was persuaded that if I had come upon him with a direct proposal, "Sir, will you dine in company with Jack Wilkes?" he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered, "Dine with Jack Wilkes, Sir! I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch?"* I therefore, while we were sitting quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to explain my plan thus— "Mr Dilly, Sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honour to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must soon go to Scotland" JOHNSON "Sir, I am obliged to Mr Dilly I will wait upon him—" BOSWELL "Provided, Sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have is agreeable to you" JOHNSON. "What do you mean, Sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world, as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?" BOSWELL "I beg your pardon, Sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his patriotick friends with him" JOHNSON. "Well, Sir, and what then? What care I for his *patriotick friends*? Poh!" BOSWELL "I should not be surprized to find Jack Wilkes there." JOHNSON "And if Jack Wilkes *should* be there, what is that to *me*, Sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this I am sorry to be angry with you, but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever, occasionally." BOSWELL.

* This has been circulated as if actually said by Johnson, when the truth is it was only *supposed* by me

"Pray forgive me Sir I meant well But you shall meet whoever comes, for me" Thus I secured him, and told Dilly that he would find him very well pleased to be one of his guests on the day appointed

Upon the much-expected Wednesday, I called on him about half an hour before dinner, as I often did when we were to dine out together, to see that he was ready in time, and to accompany him I found him buffeting his books, as upon a former occasion,* covered with dust, and making no preparation for going abroad 'How is this, Sir?' (said I) 'Don't you recollect that you are to dine at Mr Dilly's?'" JOHNSON "Sir, I did not think of going to Dilly's, it went out of my head I have ordered dinner at home with Mrs Williams" BOSWELL "But, my dear Sir, you know you were engaged to Mr Dilly, and I told him so He will expect you, and will be much disappointed if you don't come" JOHNSON. "You must talk to Mrs Williams about this"

Here was a sad dilemma I feared that what I was so confident I had secured would yet be frustrated. He had accustomed himself to shew Mrs Williams such a degree of humane attention, as frequently imposed some restraint upon him, and I knew that if she should be obstinate, he would not stir I hastened down stairs to the blind lady's room, and told her I was in great uneasiness, for Dr Johnson had engaged to me to dine this day at Mr Dilly's, but that he had told me he had forgotten his engagement, and had ordered dinner at home "Yes, Sir, (said she, pretty peevishly,) Dr Johnson is to dine at home"—"Madam, (said I,) his respect for you is such, that I know he will not leave you unless you absolutely desire it But as you have so much of his company, I hope you will be good enough to forego it for a day, as Mr Dilly is a very worthy man, has frequently had agreeable parties at his house for Dr. Johnson, and will be vexed if the Doctor neglects him to day And then, Madam, be pleased to consider my situation, I carried the message, and I assured Mr Dilly that Dr Johnson was to come, and no doubt he has made a dinner, and invited a company, and boasted of the honour he expected to have I shall be quite disgraced if the Doctor is not there" She gradually softened to my solicitations, which were certainly as earnest as most entreaties to ladies upon any occasion, and was graciously pleased to empower me to tell Dr Johnson, "That all things considered, she thought he should certainly go." I flew back to him, still in dust, and careless of what should be the event,

* See page 104 of this volume

"indifferent in his choice to go or stay," but as soon as I had announced to him Mrs Williams's consent, he roared, "Frank, a clean shirt," and was very soon drest. When I had him fairly seated in a hackney-coach with me, I exulted as much as a fortune-hunter who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna Green.

When we entered Mr Dilly's drawing-room, he found himself in the midst of a company he did not know. I kept myself snug and silent, watching how he would conduct himself. I observed him whispering to Mr Dilly, "Who is that gentleman, Sir?"—"Mr. Arthur Lee"—JOHNSON "Tut, tut, tut," (under his breath,) which was one of his habitual mutterings. Mr Arthur Lee could not but be very obnoxious to Johnson, for he was not only a *patriot* but an *American*. He was afterwards minister from the United States at the court of Madrid. "And who is the gentleman in lace?"—"Mr Wilkes, Sir." This information confounded him still more, he had some difficulty to restrain himself, and taking up a book, sat down upon a window-seat and read, or at least kept his eye upon it intently for some time, till he composed himself. His feelings, I dare say, were awkward enough. But he no doubt recollected his having rated me for supposing that he could be at all disconcerted by any company, and he, therefore, resolutely set himself to behave quite as an easy man of the world, who could adapt himself at once to the disposition and manners of those whom he might chance to meet.

The cheering sound of "Dinner is upon the table," dissolved his reverie, and we all sat down without any symptom of ill humour. There were present, besides Mr Wilkes, and Mr Arthur Lee, who was an old companion of mine when he studied physick at Edinburgh, Mr (now Sir John) Miller, Dr Lettsom, and Mr Slater the druggist. Mr Wilkes placed himself next to Dr. Johnson, and behaved to him with so much attention and politeness, that he gained upon him insensibly. No man eat more heartily than Johnson, or loved better what was nice and delicate. Mr Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal. "Pray give me leave, Sir.—It is better here.—A little of the brown—Some fat, Sir.—A little of the stuffing—Some gravy—Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter—Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange—or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest"—"Sir, Sir, I am obliged to you, Sir," cried Johnson, bowing, and turning his head to him with a look for some time of "surly virtue,"* but, in a short while, of complacency.

* Johnson's "London, a Poem," v. 145.

Foote being mentioned, Johnson said, "He is not a good mimick" One of the company added, "A merry Andrew, a buffoon." JOHNSON. "But he has wit too, and is not deficient in ideas, or in fertility and variety of imagery, and not empty of reading, he has knowledge enough to fill up his part. One species of wit he has in an eminent degree, that of escape. You drive him into a corner with both hands, but he's gone, Sir, when you think you have got him—like an animal that jumps over your head. Then he has a great range for his wit, he never lets truth stand between him and a jest, and he is sometimes mighty coarse. Garrick is under many restraints from which Foote is free." WILKES. "Garrick's wit is more like Lord Chesterfield's" JOHNSON. "The first time I was in company with Foote was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased, and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back upon my chair, and fairly laugh it out. No, Sir, he was irresistible." He upon one occasion experienced, in an extraordinary degree, the efficacy of his powers of entertaining. Amongst the many and various modes which he tried of getting money, he became a partner with a small-beer brewer, and he was to have a share of the profits for procuring customers amongst his numerous acquaintance. Fitzherbert was one who took his small-beer, but it was so bad that the servants resolved not to drink it. They were at some loss how to notify their resolution, being afraid of offending their master, who they knew liked Foote much as a companion. At last they fixed upon a little black boy, who was rather a favourite, to be their deputy, and deliver their remonstrance, and having invested him with the whole authority of the kitchen, he was to inform Mr. Fitzherbert, in all their names, upon a certain day, that they would drink Foote's small-beer no longer. On that day Foote happened to dine at Fitzherbert's, and this boy served at table, he was so delighted with Foote's stories, and merriment, and grimace, that when he went down stairs, he told them, "This is the finest man I have ever seen. I will not deliver your message. I will drink his small-beer."

Somebody observed that Garrick could not have done this. WILKES. "Garrick would have made the small-beer still smaller. He is now leaving the stage, but he will play *Scrub* all his life." I

* Foote told me that Johnson said of him, "For loud obstreperous broad-faced mirth, I know not his equal."

knew that Johnson would let nobody attack Garrick but himself, as Garrick once said to me, and I had heard him praise his liberality, so to bring out his commendation of his celebrated pupil, I said, loudly, "I have heard Garrick is liberal." JOHNSON "Yes, Sir, I know that Garrick has given away more money than any man in England that I am acquainted with, and that not from ostentatious views. Garrick was very poor when he began life, so when he came to have money, he probably was very unskilful in giving away, and saved when he should not. But Garrick began to be liberal as soon as he could, and I am of opinion, the reputation of avarice which he has had, has been very lucky for him, and prevented his having many enemies. You despise a man for avarice, but do not hate him. Garrick might have been much better attacked for living with more splendour than is suitable to a player if they had had the wit to have assaulted him in that quarter, they might have galled him more. But they have kept clamouring about his avarice, which has rescued him from much obloquy and envy."

Talking of the great difficulty of obtaining authentick information for biography, Johnson told us, "When I was a young fellow I wanted to write the 'Life of Dryden,' and in order to get materials, I applied to the only two persons then alive who had seen him, these were old Swiney,¹ and old Cibber. Swiney's information was no more than this, 'That at Will's coffee-house Dryden had a particular chair for himself, which was set by the fire in winter, and was then called his winter-chair, and that it was carried out for him to the balcony in summer, and was then called his summer-chair.' Cibber could tell no more but 'That he remembered him a decent old man, arbiter of critical disputes at Will's.' You are to consider that Cibber was then at a great distance from Dryden, had perhaps one leg only in the room, and durst not draw in the other." BOSWELL. "Yet Cibber was a man of observation?" JOHNSON. "I think not." BOSWELL. "You will allow his 'Apology' to be well done?" JOHNSON. "Very well done, to be sure, Sir. That book is a striking proof of the justice of Pope's remark

' Each might his several province well command,
Would all but stoop to what they understand ' "

¹ Better known as Owen McSwiney, once manager of Drury Lane, and an admirer of "Peg" Woffington, to whom he bequeathed his money, on the condition

of her becoming a Protestant. She publicly conformed, and received the bequest.

BOSWELL. "And his plays are good" JOHNSON "Yes, but that was his trade, *l'esprit du corps*, he had been all his life among players and play-writers I wondered that he had so little to say in conversation, for he had kept the best company, and learnt all that can be got by the ear. He abused Pindar to me, and then shewed me an Ode of his own, with an absurd couplet, making a linnet soar on an eagle's wing" I told him that when the ancients made a simile, they always made it like something real"

Mr Wilkes remarked, that "among all the bold flights of Shakspeare's imagination, the boldest was making Birnam-wood march to Dunsinane, creating a wood where there never was a shrub; a wood in Scotland! ha! ha! ha!" And he also observed, that "the clannish slavery of the Highlands of Scotland was the single exception to Milton's remark of 'The Mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty,' being worshipped in all hilly countries"—"When I was at Inverary (said he,) on a visit to my old friend, Archibald, Duke of Argyle, his dependents congratulated me on being such a favourite of his Grace I said, 'It is then, gentlemen, truly lucky for me, for if I had displeased the Duke, and he had wished it, there is not a Campbell among you but would have been ready to bring John Wilkes's head to him in a charger It would have been only

'Off with his head' So much for *Aylesbury*."

I was then member for *Aylesbury*"

Dr Johnson and Mr Wilkes talked of the contested passage in Horace's "Art of Poetry," "*Difficile est propriè communia dicere*" Mr Wilkes, according to my note, gave the interpretation thus: "It is difficult to speak with propriety of common things, as, if a poet had to speak of Queen Caroline drinking tea, he must endeavour to avoid the vulgarity of cups and saucers" But upon reading my note, he tells me that he meant to say, that "the word *communis*, being a Roman law term, signifies here things *communis juris*, that is to say, what have never yet been treated by any body, and this appears clearly from what followed,

'————— Tuque
Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
Quàm si proferres ignota indictaque primus.'"

You will easier make a tragedy out of the *Iliad* than on any subject

* See page 247 of Vol. I.

not handled before * JOHNSON "He means that it is difficult to appropriate to particular persons qualities which are common to all mankind, as Homer has done "

* My very pleasant friend himself, as well as others *who remember old stories*, will no doubt smile, when I observe that *John Wilkes* here shews himself to be of the **WARRIORIAN SCHOOL** It is nevertheless true, as appears from Dr Hurd the Bishop of Worcester's very elegant commentary and notes on the "*Epistola ad Pisum*,"

It is necessary to a fair consideration of the question, that the whole passage in which the words occur should be kept in view

"*Si quid inexpertum scenæ committis, et audes
Personam formare novam, servetur ad inicum
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet
Difficile est propriè communia dicere tuque
Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
Quam si proferres ignota indicique prius
Publica materies privati juris erit, si
Non circa vitem patulumque miraberis orbem,
Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus
Interpres, nec desilies imitator in artum
Unde pedem proferre pudor vetat aut operis lex "*

The "Commentary" thus illustrates it "But the formation of quite *new characters* is a work of great difficulty and hazard For here there is no generally received and fixed *archetype* to work after, but every one *judges* of common right, according to the extent and comprehension of his own idea, therefore he advises to labour and refit *old characters and subjects*, particularly those made known and authorised by the practice of Homer and the Epic writers

The "Note" is,

"*Difficile est propriè communia dicere*" Lambin's Comment is "*Communia hic locis appellat Horatius argumenta fabularum à nullo adhuc tractata et ita, quæ curis exposita sunt et in medio quodammodo posita, quasi vacua et à nemine occupata*" And that this is the true meaning of *communis* is evidently fixed by the words *ignota indicique*, which are explanatory of it, so that the sense given it in the commentary, is unquestionably the right one Yet, notwithstanding the clearness of the case, a late critic hath this strange passage "*Difficile quidem esse propriè communia dicere, hoc est, materiam vulgarem, notam et à medio petitam, ita immutare atque exornare, ut nota et scriptori propria videatur, ultro concedimus, et maxime procul dubio ponderis ista est observatio Sed omnibus utrinque collatis, et tum difficultis, tum venusti, tam judicii quam ingenu ratione habitis, major videtur esse gloria fabulam formari penitus novam, quam æterem, utcumque mutatam de notis exhibere* (Poet. Præl. v. ii. p. 164.)" Where having first put a wrong construction on the word *communis*, he employs it to introduce an impertinent criticism For where does the poet prefer the glory of refitting *old subjects* to that of inventing new ones? The contrary is implied in what he urges about the superior difficulty of the latter, from which he dissuades his countrymen, only in respect of their abilities and inexperience in these matters, and in order to cultivate in them, which is the main view of the Epistle, a spirit of correctness, by sending them to the old subjects, treated by the Greek writers

For my own part (with all deference for Dr Hurd, who thinks the *case clear*;) I consider the passage, "*Difficile est propriè communia dicere*," to be a *crux* for the critics on Horace

The explication which My Lord of Worcester treats with so much contempt, is nevertheless countenanced by authority which I find quoted by the learned Baxter, in his edition of Horace, "*Difficile est propriè communia dicere, h. e. res vulgares dictis verbis enarrare, vel humile thema cum dignitate tractare Difficile est communes res propriè explicare verbis*" Vet Schol."

I was much disappointed to find that the great critic, Dr Bentley, has no note

WILKES "We have no City-Poet now, that is an office which has gone into disuse. The last was Elkanah Settle. There is something in *names* which one cannot help feeling. Now *Elkanah Settle* sounds so *queer*, who can expect much from that name? We should have no hesitation to give it for John Dryden, in preference to Elkanah Settle, from the names only, without knowing their different merits." JOHNSON "I suppose, Sir, Settle did as well for Aldermen in his time, as John Home could do now. Where did Beckford and Trecotthick learn English?"

Mr Arthur Lee mentioned some Scotch who had taken possession of a barren part of America, and wondered why they should choose it. JOHNSON "Why, Sir, all barrenness is comparative. The Scotch would not know it to be barren." BOSWELL "Come, come, he is flattering the English. You have now been in Scotland, Sir, and say if you did not see meat and drink enough there." JOHNSON "Why yes, Sir, meat and drink enough to give the inhabitants sufficient strength to run away from home." All these quick and lively sallies were said sportively, quite in jest, and with a smile, which showed that he meant only wit. Upon this

upon this very difficult passage is from his vigorous and illuminated mind I should have expected to receive more satisfaction than I have yet had.

Nam in thus treats of it, "*Proprie communis diere c'est à dire qu'il n'est pas aisé de former a ces personnages d'imagination des caractres particuliers et cependant vraisemblables. Comme l'on a ele le mérite de les former tels qu'on a voulu, les fautes que l'on fait en cela sont moins pires et plus terribles. C'est pourquoi Horace, en eule de prendre tous uns des sujets connus les qui sont par exemple ceux que l'on peut tirer des poèmes d'Homere.*"

And Dacier observes upon it, "*Après avoir remarqué les deux qualités qui font donner aux personnages qu'on en eule il conseille a x l'écrivains de n user pas tr p facilement de cette liberté qu'ils ont d'en inventer, car il est très difficile de réussir dans ces nouveaux caractres. Il est mal aisé et Horace, de traiter proprement, c'est a dire, convenablement, des sujets communs. C'est a dire, des sujets incents, et qui n ont aucun fondement ni dans l'Histoire ni dans la fable, et si les appelle communs par ce qu'ils sont en disposition a to le monde et qui tout le monde a le droit de les en enter et qu'ils sont, comme on dit au premier saupant. See his observations at luge on this expression and the following.*"

After all, I cannot help entertaining some doubt whether the words, "*Difficile est p priè communis dicere*," may not have been thrown in by Horace to form a separate article in a "choice of difficulties" which a poet has to encounter, who chooses a new subject, in which case it must be uncertain which of the various explanations is the true one, and every reader has a right to decide as it may strike his own fancy. And even should the words be understood as they generally are, to be connected both with what goes before, and what comes after, the exact sense cannot be absolutely ascertained, for instance, whether *priè* is meant to signify in an *appropriated manner*, as Dr Johnson here understands it, or, as it is often used by Cicero with *propriety*, or *elegantly*. In short, it is a rare instance of a defect in perspicuity in an admirable writer, who with almost every species of excellence, is particularly remarkable for that quality. The length of this note perhaps requires an apology. Many of my readers, I doubt not, will admit that a critical discussion of a passage in a favourite classic is very engaging.¹

¹ A learned scholar has actually written ten volumes on this single line.

topick he and Mr Wilkes could perfectly assimilate, here was a bond of union between them, and I was conscious that as both of them had visited Calcutta, both were fully satisfied of the strange narrow ignorance of those who imagine that it is a land of famine. But they amused themselves with persevering in the old jokes. When I claimed a superiority for Scotland over England in one respect, that no man can be arrested there for a debt merely because another swears it against him, but there must first be the judgement of a court of law ascertaining its justice, and that a seizure of the person before judgement is obtained can take place only, if his creditor should swear that he is about to fly from the country, or, as it is technically expressed, is *in meditatione fugæ*.

WILKES "That, I should think, may be safely sworn of all the Scotch nation." JOHNSON (to Mr Wilkes) "You must know, Sir, I lately took my friend Boswell and shewed him genuine civilised life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield, my native city, that he might see for once real civility: for you know he lives among savages in Scotland, and among rakes in London." WILKES "I except when he is with grave, sober, decent people like you and me." JOHNSON (smiling) "And we ashamed of him."

They were quite frank and easy. Johnson told the story of his asking Mrs. Macaulay to allow her footman to sit down with them, to prove the ridiculousness of the argument for the equality of man kind, and he said to me afterwards, with a rod of satisfaction, "You saw Mr Wilkes acquiesced." Wilkes talked with all imaginable freedom of the ludicrous title given to the Attorney General, *Diabolus Regis*, adding "I have reason to know something about that officer, for I was prosecuted for a libel." Johnson, who many people would have supposed must have been furiously angry at hearing this talked of so lightly, said not a word. He was now, indeed, "a good humoured fellow."

After dinner we had an accession of Mrs Knowles, the Quaker lady, well known for her various talents, and of Mr Alderman Lee. Amidst some patriotic groans, somebody (I think the Alderman) said, "Poor Old England is lost." JOHNSON "Sir, it is not so much to be lamented that Old England is lost, as that the Scotch have found it." WILKES "Had Lord Bute governed Scotland only, I should not have taken the trouble to write his eulogy, and dedicate 'MORTIMER' to him."

* It would not become me to expatiate on this strong and pointed remark, in which a very great deal of meaning is condensed.

Mr. Wilkes held a candle to shew a fine print of a beautiful female figure which hung in the room, and pointed out the elegant contour of the bosom with the finger of an arch connoisseur. He afterwards waggishly insisted with me, that all the time Johnson shewed visible signs of a fervent admiration of the corresponding charms of the fair Quaker

This record, though by no means so perfect as I could wish, will serve to give a notion of a very curious interview, which was not only pleasing at the time, but had the agreeable and benignant effect of reconciling any animosity, and sweetening any acidity, which in the various bustle of political contest, had been produced in the minds of two men, who though widely different, had so many things in common—classical learning, modern literature, wit, and humour, and ready repartee—that it would have been much to be regretted if they had been for ever at a distance from each other

Mr Burke gave me much credit for this successful *negociation*, and pleasantly said, that “there was nothing to equal it in the whole history of the *Corps Diplomatique*”¹

I attended Dr Johnson home, and had the satisfaction to hear him tell Mrs Williams how much he had been pleased with Mr Wilkes's company, and what an agreeable day he had passed

I talked a good deal to him of the celebrated Margaret Caroline Rudd, whom I had visited, induced by the fame of her talents, address, and irresistible power of fascination To a lady who disapproved of my visiting her, he said on a former occasion, “Nay, Madam, Boswell is in the right, I should have visited her myself, were it not that they have now a trick of putting every thing into the newspapers” This evening he exclaimed, “I envy him his acquaintance with Mrs Rudd”²

¹ Seven years later, in May, 1783, Boswell went a step farther, and tried to arrange a dinner at Mr Wilkes' house “He finds,” he wrote to Wilkes, then chamberlain, “that it would not be unpleasant to Dr Johnson to dine at Mr Wilkes’” The thing would be so curiously benignant, it were a pity it should not take place Nobody but Mr Boswell should be asked to meet the Doctor Mr Boswell goes for Scotland on Friday, the 30th If, then, a card were sent to the Doctor on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, without delay, it is to be hoped he would be fixed, and notice will be sent to Mr Boswell” Johnson wrote, on May 24, “Mr Johnson returns thanks to Mr. and Miss Wilkes for their kind invitation, but he is engaged for

Tuesday to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and for Wednesday to Mr Paradise” Boswell, enclosing this letter, regretted that the meeting had to be deferred until next year By that time there were to be no more dinner parties for the doctor

² This woman was a confederate of the Perreaus in their forgeries, and by some quibble in the law of approvers escaped punishment, though they were executed Her good looks, tears and audacity, excited sympathy, and her acquittal excited “the loudest applauses almost ever known in a court of justice” “I have got acquainted,” writes Mr Boswell to his friend Temple, “with the celebrated Mrs Rudd I was sending an account of this to my wife, but as it appeared to me highly entertaining, I thought you should have a

I mentioned a scheme which I had of making a tour to the Isle of Man, and giving a full account of it, and that Mr. Burke had playfully suggested as a motto,

"The proper study of mankind is MAN"

JOHNSON "Sir you will get more by the book than the jaunt will cost you, so you will have your diversion for nothing, and add to your reputation

On the evening of the next day I took leave of him, being to set out for Scotland. I thanked him with great warmth for all his kindness. "Sir, (said he,) you are very welcome. Nobody repays it with more

How very false is the notion which has gone round the world of the rough and passionate, and harsh manners of this great and good man. That he had occasional sallies of heat of temper, and that he was sometimes, perhaps, too "easily provoked" by absurdity and folly, and sometimes too desirous of triumph in colloquial contest, must be allowed. The quickness both of his perception and sensibility disposed him to sudden explosions of satire, to which his extraordinary readiness of wit was a strong, and almost irresistible incitement. To adopt one of the finest images in Mr. Home's "Douglas,"

— — — — — On each glance of thought
Decision followed, as the thunderbolt
Pursues the flash!" — — —

I admit that the beadle within him was often so eager to apply the lash, that the Judge had not time to consider the case with sufficient deliberation.

reading of it I therefore send it" Angelo (*Immo*, 1. 469) testifies to her power of fascination. On the day of her trial the court was crowded to excess. Being there early I obtained a station near her at the bar. She was in person of the middle size, with small but beautiful features and very fair. She looked pale and appeared much affected. As the jury returned the prisoner fixed her fascinating eyes upon the jury box, when the conduct of the foreman, a well known gay auctioneer, did not escape observation for by a smile which he significantly glanced towards her, many anticipated the verdict. She was acquitted.

Boswell, as Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale left well satisfied with the result of his expedition to town, as he had obtained the promise of a place from some great

man. In spite of his assiduous courting, he was destined never to obtain anything but a trifling recordership. Lord Falmington and Mount Stuart Mr. Pitt, and many more, all failed him. "Mr. Burke, when in power" writes the candidate himself (*Memoir, Europ. Mag.*), "shewed his sense of Mr. Boswell's merit in the warmest manner, observing

"We must do something for you for our own sakes" and recommended him to General Clarke for a vacant place by a letter in which his character was drawn in glowing colours. It was generally supposed that Mr. Boswell would have had a seat in parliament, and indeed his not being among the Commons is one of those strange things which occasionally happen in the complex operation of our mixed government."

That he was occasionally remarkable for violence of temper may be granted. but let us ascertain the degree, and not let it be supposed that he was in a perpetual rage, and never without a club in his hand, to knock down every one who approached him. On the contrary, the truth is, that by much the greatest part of his time he was civil, obliging, nay, polite in the true sense of the word; so much so, that many gentlemen, who were long acquainted with him, never received, or even heard a severe expression from him.

It was, I think, after I had left London this year, that an Epitaph, which Dr Johnson had written for the monument of Dr Goldsmith in Westminster-Abbey, gave occasion to a *Remonstrance* to the MONARCH OF LITERATURE, for an account of which I am indebted to Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo.

That my readers may have the subject more fully and clearly before them, I shall first insert the Epitaph.

"OLIVARIUS GOLDSMITH,
Poeta, Physici, Historici,
Qui nullum ferè scribendi genus
Non tetigit,
Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit

Second Edition — Line 8 "Severe" altered to "strong"
Cor. et Ad — After line 8, read, "The following letters concerning an Epitaph which he wrote for the monument of Dr Goldsmith in Westminster Abbey, afford at once a proof of his unaffected modesty, his carelessness as to his own writings, and of the great respect which he entertained for the taste and judgement of the excellent and eminent person to whom they are addressed."

"TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"DEAR SIR,—I have been kept away from you, I know not well how, and of these vexatious hindrances I know not when there will be an end. I therefore send you the poor dear Doctor's epitaph. Read it first yourself, and if you then think it right, show it to the Club. I am, you know, willing to be corrected. If you think any thing much amiss, keep it to yourself, till we come together. I have sent two copies, but prefer the card. The dates must be settled by Dr Percy. I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"May 16, 1776"

"SAM JOHNSON

"TO THE SAME

"SIR,—Miss Reynolds has a mind to send the Epitaph to Dr Beattie, I am very willing, but having no copy, cannot immediately recollect it. She tells me you have lost it. Try to recollect, and put down as much as you retain, you perhaps may have kept what I have dropped. The lines for which I am at a loss are something of *rerum civilium sive naturalium*. It was a sorry trick to lose it, help me if you can. I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"June 22, 1776

"SAM JOHNSON.

"The gout grows better but slowly"

Ibid — Line 9 For "an" read "this," and *del.* the words between "Epitaph" and "gave."

*Sive risus essent movendi,
 Sive lacrymæ,
 Afflictuum potens at lenis dominator
 Ingenio sublimis, vividus, versatilis,
 Oratione grandis, nitidus, venustus:
 Hoc monumento memoriam coluit
 Sodalium amor,
 Amicorum fides,
 Lectorum veneratio.
 Natus in Hibernia Fornæ Longfordiensis
 In loco cui nomen Pallas,
 Nov. XXIX M DCC XXXI;
 Lblanæ literis institutus;
 Obiit Londini,
 April IV M DCC LXXXIV"*

Sir William Forbes writes to me thus — "I enclose the *Round Robin*. This *jeu d'esprit* took its rise one day at dinner at our friend Sir Joshua Reynolds's. All the company present, except myself, were friends and acquaintance of Dr Goldsmith. The Epitaph, written for him by Dr Johnson, became the subject of conversation, and various emendations were suggested, which it was agreed should be submitted to the Doctor's consideration — But the question was, who should have the courage to propose them to him? At last it was hinted, that there could be no way so good as that of a *Round Robin*, as the sailors call it, which they make use of when they enter into a conspiracy, so as not to let it be known who puts his name first or last to the paper. This proposition was instantly assented to, and Dr Barnard, Dean of Derry, now Bishop of Killaloe, drew up an address to Dr Johnson on the occasion, replete with wit and humour, but which it was feared the Doctor might think treated the subject with too much levity. Mr Burke then proposed the address as it stands in the paper in writing, to which I had the honour to officiate as clerk.

"Sir Joshua agreed to carry it to Dr Johnson, who received it with much good humour," and desired Sir Joshua to tell the gentlemen,

Cor et Ad — Line 15, read "M DCC LXXXIV"

* He however, upon seeing Dr Warton's name to the suggestion that the Epitaph should be in English, observed to Sir Joshua, "I wonder that Joe Warton, a scholar by profession, should be such a fool." Mr Langton, who was one of the company at Sir Joshua's, like a sturdy scholar, resolutely refused to sign the *Round Robin*. The epitaph is engraved upon Dr Goldsmith's monument without any alteration.

Second Edition, line 3 in note, after "such a fool" — He said, too, "I should have thought Mund Burke would have had more sense."

Cor et Ad — Add to the note as follows — "At another time, when somebody endeavoured to argue in favour of its being in English, Johnson said, 'The language of the country of which a learned man was a native, is not the language fit for his

that he would alter the Epitaph in any manner they pleased, as to the sense of it, but *he would never consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster-Abbey with an English inscription*

"I consider this *Round Robin* as a species of literary curiosity worth preserving, as it marks, in a certain degree, Dr Johnson's character"

My readers are presented with a faithful transcript of a paper which I doubt not of their being desirous to see.

Sir William Forbes's observation is very just The anecdote now related proves, in the strongest manner, the reverence and awe with which Johnson was regarded, by some of the most eminent men of his time in various departments, and even by such of them as lived most with him, while it also confirms what I have again and again inculcated, that he was by no means of that ferocious and irascible character which has been ignorantly imagined

This hasty composition is also to be remarked as one of a thousand instances which evince the extraordinary promptitude of Mr Burke who while he is equal to the greatest things, can adorn the least, can, with equal facility, embrace the vast and complicated speculations of politticks or the ingenious topicks of literary investigation

Besides this Latin Epitaph, Johnson honoured the memory of his friend Goldsmith with a short one in Greek, which has been obligingly communicated to me by my learned and ingenious friend Dr. Peircy, the Bishop of Dromore His Lordship procured it from a gentleman in Ireland, who had it from Johnson himself, Mr. Archdall, who was educated under Dr. Sumner, at Harrow.

"Τὸν τάφον εἰσαγαγὼς Ὀλειβερσίου, κανὴν
Ἄφρασι μὴ γεμῆν ξεῖνι ποδῶσι πατρί
Οἷσι μεμῆλε φύσις, μετρῶν χάρις, ἐργὰ παλαιῶν
Κλαίετε ποιητὴν, ἱστορικόν, φυσικόν "

epitaph, which should be in ancient and permanent language Consider, Sir, how you should feel, were you to find at Rotterdam an epitaph upon Erasmus *in Dutch* "—For my own part, I think it would be best to have epitaphs written both in a learned language, and in the language of the country, so that they might have the advantage of being more universally understood, and at the same time be secured of classical stability I cannot, however, but be of opinion, that it is not sufficiently discriminative Applying to Goldsmith equally the epithets of '*Poeta, Historici, Physici*,' is surely not right, for as to his claim to the last of those epithets, I have heard Johnson himself say, 'Goldsmith, Sir, will give us a very fine book upon the subject, but if he can distinguish a cow from a horse, that, I believe, may be the extent of his knowledge of natural history' His book is indeed an excellent performance, though in some instances he appears to have trusted too much to Buffon, who, with all his theoretical ingenuity and extraordinary eloquence, I suspect had little actual information in the science on which he wrote so admirably For instance, he tells us that the *cow* sheds her horns every two years, a most palpable error, which Goldsmith has faithfully transferred into his book It is wonderful that Buffon, who lived so much in the country, at his noble seat, should have fallen into such a blunder. I suppose he has confounded the *cow* with the *deer* "

Dr JOHNSON to Mrs BOSWELL.

"MADAM — You must not think me uncivil in omitting to answer the letter with which you favoured me some time ago. I imagined it to have been written without Mr Boswell's knowledge, and therefore supposed the answer to require, what I could not find, a private conveyance

"The difference with Lord Auchinleck is now over, and since young Alexander has appeared, I hope no more difficulties will arise among you, for I sincerely wish you all happy. Do not teach the young ones to dislike me, as you dislike me yourself; but let me at least have Veronica's kindness, because she is my acquaintance

"You will now have Mr. Boswell home, it is well that you have him, he has led a wild life. I have taken him to Lichfield, and he has followed Mr Thrale to Bath. Pray take care of him, and tame him. The only thing in which I have the honour to agree with you is, in loving him, and while we are so much of a mind in a matter of so much importance, our other quarrels will, I hope, produce no great bitterness. I am, Madam,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"May 16, 1776"

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

"Edinburgh, June 25, 1776

"You have formerly complained that my letters were too long. There is no danger of that complaint being made at present, for I find it difficult for me to write to you at all. [Here an account of having been afflicted with a return of melancholy or bad spirits]

"The boxes of books* which you sent to me are arrived; but I have not yet examined the contents

* * * * *

"I send you Mr Maclaurin's paper for the negro, who claims his freedom in the Court of Session

Dr JOHNSON to Mr. BOSWELL.

"DEAR SIR,—These black fits, of which you complain, perhaps hurt your memory as well as your imagination. When did I complain that your letters were too long?"^b Your last letter, after a

^a Upon a settlement of our account of expences on our Tour to the Hebrides, there was a balance due to me, which Dr Johnson chose to discharge by sending books

^b Baretta told me that Johnson complained of my writing very long letters to him, when I was upon the continent, which was most certainly true, but it seems my friend did not remember it.

very long delay, brought very bad news. [Here a series of reflections upon melancholy, and—what I could not help thinking strangely unreasonable in him who had suffered so much from it himself—a good deal of severity and reproof, as if it were owing to my own fault, or that I was, perhaps, affecting it from a desire of distinction]

“Read Cheyne’s ‘English Malady,’ but do not let him teach you a foolish notion that melancholy is a proof of acuteness * * *.

“To hear that you have not opened your boxes of books is very offensive. The examination and arrangement of so many volumes might have afforded you an amusement very seasonable at present, and useful for the whole of life. I am, I confess, very angry that you manage yourself so ill * * * * *

“I do not now say any more, than that I am, with great kindness and sincerity, dear Sir,

“Your humble servant,

“July 2, 1776

“SAM JOHNSON

“It was last year determined by Lord Mansfield, in the Court of King’s Bench, that a negro cannot be taken out of the kingdom without his own consent.”

Dr JOHNSON to Mr BOSWELL

“DEAR SIR,—I make haste to write again, lest my last letter should give you too much pain. If you are really oppressed with overpowering and involuntary melancholy, you are to be pitied rather than reproached * * * * *.

“Now, my dear Boszy, let us have done with quarrels and with censure. Let me know whether I have not sent you a pretty library. There are, perhaps, many books among them which you need never read through, but there are none which it is not proper for you to know, and sometimes to consult. Of these books, of which the use is only occasional, it is often sufficient to know the contents, that, when any question arises, you may know where to look for information.

“Since I wrote, I have looked over Mr Maclaurin’s plea, and think it excellent. How is the suit carried on? If by subscription, I commission you to contribute, in my name, what is proper. Let nothing be wanting in such a case. Dr. Drummond,^a I see, is

^a The son of Johnson’s old friend, Mr William Drummond. (See Vol I p 286.) He was a young man of such distinguished merit, that he was nominated to one of the medical professorships in the College of Edinburgh, without solicitation, while he was at Naples. Having other views, he did not accept of the honour, and soon afterwards died.

superseded. His father would have grieved, but he lived to obtain the pleasure of his son's election, and died before that pleasure was abated.

"Langton's lady has brought him a girl, and both are well; I dined with him the other day * * * * *

"It vexes me to tell you, that on the evening of the 29th of May I was seized by the gout, and am not quite well. The pain has not been violent, but the weakness, and tenderness were very troublesome, and what is said to be very uncommon, it has not alleviated my other disorders. Make use of youth and health while you have them, make my compliments to Mrs Boswell. I am, my dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"July 6, 1776"

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, July 18, 1776

"MY DEAR SIR—Your letter of the second of this month was rather a harsh medicine, but I was delighted with that spontaneous tenderness, which, a few days afterwards, sent forth such balsam as your next brought me. I found myself for some time so ill that all I could do was to preserve a decent appearance, while all within was weakness and distress. Like a reduced garrison that has some spirit left, I hung out flags, and planted all the force I could muster, upon the walls. I am now much better, and I sincerely thank you for your kind attention and friendly counsel.

* * * * *

"Count Manucci" came here last week from travelling in Ireland. I have shewn him what civilities I could on his own account, your's, and on that of Mr. and Mrs Thrale. He has had a fall from his horse, and been much hurt. I regret this unlucky accident, for he seems to be a very amiable man."

As the evidence of what I have mentioned at the beginning of this year, I select from his private register the following passage:

"July 25, 1776. O God, who hast ordained that whatever is to be desired should be sought by labour, and who, by thy blessing, bringest honest labour to good effect, look with mercy upon my studies and endeavours. Grant me, O LORD, to design only what is

* A Florentine nobleman mentioned by Johnson, in his "Notes of his Tour in France." I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with him in London, in the spring of this year.

lawful and right; and afford me calmness of mind, and steadiness of purpose, that I may so do thy will in this short life, as to obtain happiness in the world to come, for the sake of JESUS CHRIST our Lord Amen." *

It appears from a note subjoined, that this was composed when he "purposed to apply vigorously to study, particularly of the Greek and Italian tongues"

Such a purpose, so expressed, at the age of sixty-seven, is admirable and encouraging, and it must impress all the thinking part of my readers with a consolatory confidence in habitual devotion, when they see a man of such enlarged intellectual powers as Johnson, thus in the genuine earnestness of secrecy, imploring the aid of that Supreme Being, "from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift"

Mr Boswell to Dr Johnson

^a Edinburgh Augst 30, 1776

[After giving him an account of my having examined the chests of books which he had sent to me and which contained what may be truly called a numerous and miscellaneous *Stall Library*, throw together at random —]

"Lord Hailes was against the decree in the case of my client, the minister, not that he justified the minister, but because the parishioner both provoked and retorted. I sent his Lordship your able argument upon the case for his perusal His observation upon it in a letter to me was, 'Dr. Johnson's *Suasorium* is pleasantly^b and artfully composed. I suspect, however, that he has not con-

^a Prayers and Meditations, p 151

^b Why his lordship uses the epithet *pleasantly*, when speaking of a grave piece of reasoning, I cannot conceive But different men have different notions of pleasantry I happened to sit by a gentleman one evening at the Opera-house in London, who, at the moment when *Medea* appeared to be in great agony at the thought of killing her children, turned to me with a smile, and said, "*funny enough*"

Cor et ad —After line 14, read—

"TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

"SIR,—A young man, whose name is Paterson, offers himself this evening to the Academy He is the son of a man for whom I have long had a kindness, and who is now abroad in distress I shall be glad that you will be pleased to shew him any little countenance, or pay him any small distinction How much it is in your power to favour or to forward a young man I do not know, nor do I know how much this candidate deserves favour by his personal merit, or what hopes his proficiency may now give of future eminence I recommend him as the son of my friend Your character and station enable you to give a young man great encouragement by very easy means You have heard of a man who asked no other favour of Sir Robert Walpole, than that he would bow to him at his levee I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"August 3, 1776."

vinced himself, for, I believe that he is better read in ecclesiastical history, than to imagine that a Bishop or a Presbyter has a right to begin censure or discipline *à cathedra* "a

* * * * *

"For the honour of Count Manucci, as well as to observe that exactness of truth which you have taught me, I must correct what I said in a former letter. He did not fall from his horse, which might have been an imputation on his skill as an officer of cavalry, his horse fell with him

"I have, since I saw you, read every word of 'Granger's Biographical History' It has entertained me exceedingly, and I do not think him the *Whig* that you supposed Horace Walpole's being his patron is, indeed, no good sign of his political principles But he denied to Lord Mountstuart that he was a Whig, and said he had been accused by both parties of partiality. It seems he was like Pope,

' While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory

I wish you would look more into his book, and as Lord Mountstuart wishes much to find a proper person to continue the work upon Granger's plan, and has desired I would mention it to you, if such a man occur, please to let me know His Lordship will give him generous encouragement "

I again wrote to Dr. Johnson on the 21st of October, informing him, that my father had, in the most liberal manner, paid a large debt for me, and that I had now the happiness of being upon very good terms with him, to which he returned the following answer

* Dr Johnson afterwards told me, that he was of opinion that a clergyman had this right

(*Or. et Ad* —After line 22, read—

"TO MR ROBERT LEVETT

' DEAR SIR,—Having spent about six weeks at this place we have at length resolved upon returning I expect to see you all in Fleet street on the 30th of this month

"I did not go into the sea till last Friday, but think to go most of this week, though I know not that it does me any good My nights are very restless and troublesome, but I am otherwise well

I have written word of my coming to Mrs Williams Remember me kindly to Francis and Betsy I am, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON "

"Brightelmstone, Oct 21, 1776

* For this and Dr Johnson's other letters to Mr Levett, I am indebted to my old acquaintance Mr Nathaniel Thomas, whose worth and ingenuity have been long known to a respectable though not a wide circle, and whose collection of medals would do credit to persons of greater opulence

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—I had great pleasure in hearing that you are at last on good terms with your father. Cultivate his kindness by all honest and manly means. Life is but short, no time can be afforded but for the indulgence of real sorrow, or contests upon questions seriously momentous. Let us not throw any of our days away upon useless resentment, or contend who shall hold out longest in stubborn malignity. It is best not to be angry, and best, in the next place, to be quickly reconciled. May you and your father pass the remainder of your time in reciprocal benevolence!"

* * * * *

"Do you ever hear from Mr Langton? I visit him sometimes, but he does not talk. I do not like his scheme of life, but, as I am not permitted to understand it, I cannot set anything right that is wrong. His children are sweet babies.

"I hope my irreconcilable enemy, Mrs Boswell, is well. Desire her not to transmit her malevolence to the young people. Let me have Alexander, and Veronica, and Euphemia, for my friends.

"Mrs Williams, whom you may reckon as one of your well-wishers, is in a feeble and languishing state, with little hope of growing better. She went for some part of the autumn into the country, but is little benefited, and Dr Lawrence confesses that his art is at an end. Death is, however, at a distance, and what more than that can we say of ourselves? I am sorry for her pain, and more sorry for her decay. Mr Levett is round, wind and limb.

"I was some weeks this autumn at Brighthelmston. The place was very dull, and I was not well. the expedition to the Hebrides was the most pleasant journey that I ever made. Such an effort annually would give the world a little diversification.

"Every year, however, we cannot wander, and must therefore endeavour to spend our time at home as well as we can. I believe it is best to throw life into a method, that every hour may bring its employment, and every employment have its hour. Xenophon observes, in his 'Treatise of Oeconomy,' that if every thing be kept in a certain place, when any thing is worn out or consumed, the vacuity which it leaves will shew what is wanting, so, if every part of time has its duty, the hour will call into remembrance its proper engagement.

"I have not practised all this prudence myself, but I have suf-

ferred much for want of it, and I would have you, by timely recollection and steady resolution, escape from those evils which have lain heavy upon me I am, my dearest Boswell,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"Bolt court, Nov 16, 1776"

On the 16th of November I informed him that Mr Strahan had sent me *twelve* copies of the "*Journey to the Western Islands*," handsomely bound, instead of the *twenty* copies which were stipulated, but which, I supposed, were to be only in sheets, requested to know how they should be distributed and mentioned that I had another son born to me, who was named David, and was a sickly infant.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—I have been for some time ill of a cold, which, perhaps, I made an excuse to myself for not writing, when in reality I knew not what to say

"The books you must at last distribute as you think best, in my name, or your own, as you are inclined, or as you judge most proper Every body cannot be obliged, but I wish that nobody may be offended Do the best you can

"I congratulate you on the increase of your family, and hope that little David is by this time well, and his mamma perfectly recovered I am much pleased to hear of the re-establishment of kindness between you and your father Cultivate his paternal tenderness as much as you can To live at variance at all is uncomfortable, and variance with a father is still more uncomfortable Besides that, in the whole dispute you have the wrong side, at least you gave the first provocation, and some of them very offensive Let it now be all over As you have no reason to think that your new mother has shown you any foul play, treat her with respect, and with some degree of confidence, this will secure your father When once a discordant family has felt the pleasure of peace, they will not willingly lose it If Mrs Boswell would but be friends with me, we might now shut the temple of Janus

"What came of Dr Memis's cause? Is the question about the negro determined? Has Sir Allan any reasonable hopes? What is become of poor Macquarry? Let me know the event of all these litigations I wish particularly well to the negro and Sir Allan

"Mrs. Williams has been much out of order, and though she is something better, is likely, in her physician's opinion, to endure her malady for life, though she may, perhaps, die of some other. Mrs.

Thrale is big, and fancies that she carries a boy, if it were very reasonable to wish much about it, I should wish her not to be disappointed. The desire of male heirs is not appendant only to feudal tenures. A son is almost necessary to the continuance of Thrale's fortune, for what can misses do with a brewhouse? Lands are fitter for daughters than trades.

"Baretti went away from Thrale's in some whimsical fit of disgust or ill-nature, without taking any leave¹. It is well if he finds in any other place as good an habitation, and as many conveniences. He has got five-and-twenty guineas by translating Sir Joshua's Discourses into Italian, and Mr Thrale gave him an hundred in the spring, so that he is yet in no difficulties.

"Colman has bought Foote's patent, and is to allow Foote for life sixteen hundred pounds a year, as Reynolds told me, and to allow him to play so often on such terms that he may gain four hundred pounds more. What Colman can get by this bargain, but trouble and hazard, I do not see." I am, dear Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"Dec 21, 1776"

"SAM. JOHNSON.

¹ Baretti was nearly three years a member of the household, and seems to have been a standing element of discord—sowing up his pupils to revolt against their mother. It is evident that he was imposed on the mistress of the house by the good-natured partiality of Mr Thrale and Johnson. The lady's account is as follows—

"Yesterday, when Sir Joshua and I, Maurice dined here, I addressed myself to him with great particularity of attention, begging his company for Saturday, as I expected ladies, and said he must come and flirt with them, &c. My daughter in the meantime kept on telling me that Mr Baretti was grown very old and very cross, would not look at her exercises, but said he would leave this house soon for it was no better than Pandemonium. Accordingly, the next day he packed up his cloak-bag which he had not done for three years, and sent it to town, and while we were wondering what he would say about it at breakfast, he was walking to London himself, without taking leave of any one person, except it may be the girl, who owns they had much talk, in the course of which he expressed great aversion to me and even to her, who, he said, he once thought well of.

"Now whether she had ever told the

in things that I might have said of him in his absence, by way of provoking him to go, and so rid herself of his tuition, whether he was pulled up with the last 100 guineas and forged to be spending it *all' Italiano*, whether he thought Mr Thrale would call him back, and he should be better established here than ever, or whether he really was idiot enough to be angry at my threatening to whip Susan and Sophy for going out of bounds, although he had given them leave, for Betty said that was the first offence he took huff at, I never shall know."

His own reflections on the matter are to be found in his *Marginalia*—

"On this day I quitted Streatham without taking leave, perfectly tired with the impertinence of the lady, who took every opportunity to disgust me. I had by that time been, in a manner, one of the family during six years and a half, teaching Querry Spanish and Italian from morn till night, at her earnest desire originally, and Johnson's, who had made me hope that Thrale would at last give me an annuity for my pains, but never receiving a shilling from him or from her, I grew tired at last, and on some provocation from her, left them abruptly."

² It proved a lucky venture, as Colman only had to make a single year's payment

The Reverend Dr Hugh Blair, who had long been admired as a preacher at Edinburgh, thought now of diffusing his excellent sermons more extensively, and encreasing his reputation, by publishing a collection of them. He transmitted the manuscript to Mr Strahan, the printer, who after keeping it for some time, wrote a letter to him, discouraging the publication. Such at first was the unpropitious state of one of the most successful theological books that has ever appeared. Mr Strahan, however, had sent one of the sermons to Dr Johnson for his opinion, and after his unfavourable letter to Dr Blair had been sent off, he received from Johnson on Christmas-eve, a note in which was the following paragraph.

"I have read over Dr Blair's first sermon with more than approbation, to say it is good, is to say too little.

I believe Mr Strahan had very soon after this time a conversation with Dr Johnson concerning them and then he very candidly wrote again to Dr Blair, enclosing Johnson's note, and agreeing to purchase the volume for which he and Mr Cadell gave one hundred pounds. The sale was so rapid and extensive, and the approbation of the publick so high, that to their honour be it recorded, the proprietors made Dr Blair a present first of one sum, and afterwards of another, of fifty pounds, thus voluntarily doubling the stipulated price, and when he prepared another volume they gave him at once three hundred pounds, being in all five hundred pounds, by an agreement to which I am a subscribing witness, and now for a third octavo volume he has received no less than six hundred pounds.

In 1777, it appears from his "*Prayers and Meditations*" that Johnson suffered much from a state of mind "unsettled and perplexed, and from that constitutional gloom, which, together with his extreme humility and anxiety with regard to his religious state, made him contemplate himself through too dark and unfavourable a medium. It may be said of him, that he "saw God in clouds." Certain we may be of his injustice to himself in the following lamentable paragraph which it is painful to think came from the contrite heart of this great man, to whose labours the world is so much indebted. "When I survey my past life, I discover nothing but a barren waste of time with some disorders of body, and disturbances of the mind very near to madness, which I hope He that made me will suffer to extenuate many faults, and excuse many deficiencies."* But we find his devotions in this year eminently

* *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 155

fervent, and we are comforted by observing intervals of quiet, composure, and gladness

On Easter-day we find the following emphatick prayer: "Almighty and most merciful Father, who seest all our miseries, and knowest all our necessities, look down upon me, and pity me. Defend me from the violent incursion of evil thoughts, and enable me to form and keep such resolutions as may conduce to the discharge of the duties which thy providence shall appoint me, and so help me, by thy Holy Spirit, that my heart may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found, and that I may serve Thee with pure affection and a cheerful mind. Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me, years and infirmities oppress me, terrour and anxiety beset me. Have mercy upon me, my Creator and my Judge. In all perplexities relieve and free me; and so help me by thy Holy Spirit, that I may now so commemorate the death of thy Son our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, as that when this short and painful life shall have an end, I may, for his sake be received to everlasting happiness. Amen."

While he was at church the agreeable impressions upon his mind are thus commemorated, "I was for some time much distressed, but at last obtained, I hope from the God of Peace, more quiet than I have enjoyed for a long time. I had made no resolution, but as my heart grew lighter, my hopes revived, and my courage increased, and I wrote with my pencil in my Common Prayer Book,

*"Vita ordinanda
Biblia legenda
Theologiæ opera danda.
Servingendum et lætandum."*

Mr Steevens, whose generosity is well known, joined Dr Johnson in kind assistance to a female relation of Dr Goldsmith, and desired that on her return to Ireland she would procure authentick particulars of the life of her celebrated relation. Concerning her there is the following letter.

To GEORGE STEEVENS, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—You will be glad to hear that from Mrs Goldsmith,¹ whom we lamented as drowned, I have received a letter full of

* Prayers and Meditations, p 158 *

¹ This must have been Henry Goldsmith's daughter. See Appendix A, vol II., of Mr Forster's life of the poet. Nearly twenty years later Steevens was

again exerting himself for the destitute members of the family

² This should be p 157

gratitude to us all, with promise to make the enquiries which we recommended to her

"I would have had the honour of conveying this intelligence to Miss Caulfield,¹ but that her letter is not at hand, and I know not the direction. You will tell the good news I am, Sir,

"Your most, &c

"SAM JOHNSON.

"February 25 1777"

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

Edinburgh, Feb 14, 1777

"MY DEAR SIR,—My state of epistolary accounts with you at present is extraordinary The balance, as to number, is on your side I am indebted to you for two letters, one dated the 16th of November, upon which very day I wrote to you, so that our letters were exactly exchanged, and one dated the 21st of December last

"My heart was warmed with gratitude by the truly kind contents of both of them, and it is amazing and vexing that I have allowed so much time to elapse without writing to you But delay is inherent in me, by nature or by bad habit I waited till I should have an opportunity of paying you my compliments on a new year. I have procrastinated till the year is no longer new

* * * * *

"Dr MEMIS's cause was determined against him, with 40l costs. The Lord President, and two other of the Judges, dissented from the majority upon this ground — that although there may have been no intention to insult him, calling him *Doctor of Medicine*, instead of *Physician* yet as he remonstrated against the designation before the charter was printed off, and represented that it was disagreeable and even hurtful to him, it was ill-natured to refuse to alter it, and let him have the designation to which he was certainly entitled My own opinion is, that our court has judged wrong The defendants were *in mala fide*, to persist in naming him in a way that he disliked You remember poor Goldsmith, when he grew important and wished to appear *Doctor Major*, could not bear you calling him *Goldy* Would it not have been wrong to have named him so in your 'Preface to Shakspeare,' or in any serious permanent writing of any sort? The difficulty is, whether an action should be allowed on such petty wrongs *De minimis non curat lex*.

¹ A relation of Lord Charlemont's

"The Negro cause is not yet decided A memorial is preparing on the side of slavery I shall send you a copy as soon as it is printed Maclaurin is made happy by your approbation of his memorial for the black.

"Macquarry was here in the winter, and we passed an evening together. The sale of his estate cannot be prevented.

"Sir Allan Maclean's suit against the Duke of Argyle, for recovering the ancient inheritance of his family, is now fairly before all our Judges I spoke for him yesterday, and Maclaurin to-day Crosbie spoke to-day against him Three more counsel are to be heard, and next week the cause will be determined I send you the *Informations* or *Cases* on each side, which I hope you will read You said to me when we were under Sir Allan's hospitable roof, 'I will help him with my pen' You said it with a generous glow, and though his Grace of Argyle did afterwards mount you upon an excellent horse, upon which 'you looked like a Bishop,' you must not swerve from your purpose at Inchkenneth I wish you may understand the points at issue, amidst our Scotch law principles and phrases

[Here followed a full state of the case, in which I endeavoured to make it as clear as I could to an Englishman, who had no knowledge of the formularies and technical language of the law of Scotland]

"I shall inform you how the cause is decided here But as it may be brought under the review of our judges, and is certainly to be carried by appeal to the House of Lords, the assistance of such a mind as yours will be of consequence Your paper on *Vicious Intromission* is a noble proof of what you can do even in Scotch law

* * * * *

"I have not yet distributed all your books Lord Hailes and Lord Monboddo have each received one, and return you thanks. Monboddo dined with me lately, and having drank tea, we were a good while by ourselves, and as I knew that he had read the 'Journey' superficially, as he did not talk of it as I wished, I brought it to him, and read aloud several passages, and then he talked so, that I told him he was to have a copy *from the authour*. He begged *that* might be marked on it.

* * * * *

"I ever am, my dear Sir,

"Your most faithful

"And affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL "

SIR ALEXANDER DICK to Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Prestonfield, Feb. 17, 1777

"SIR,—I had yesterday the honour of receiving your book of your '*Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*,' which you was so good as to send me, by the hands of our mutual friend, Mr. Boswell, of Auchinleck, for which I return you my most hearty thanks, and after carefully reading it over again, shall deposit it in my little collection of choice books, next our worthy friend's '*Journey to Corsica*.' As there are many things to admire in both performances, I have often wished that no Travels or Journeys should be published but those undertaken by persons of integrity and capacity, to judge well, and describe faithfully, and in good language, the situation, condition, and manners of the countries past through. Indeed our country of Scotland, in spite of the union of the crowns, is still in most places so devoid of cloathing, or cover from hedges and plantations, that it was well you gave your readers a sound *monitoire* with respect to that circumstance. The truths you have told, and the purity of the language in which they are expressed, as your '*Journey*' is universally read, may and already appear to have a very good effect. For a man of my acquaintance, who has the largest nursery for trees and hedges in this country, tells me, that of late the demand upon him for these articles is doubled, and sometimes tripled. I have, therefore, listed Dr Samuel Johnson in some of my memorandums of the principal planters and favoursers of the enclosures, under a name which I took the liberty to invent from the Greek, *Papadendron*. Lord Auchinleck and some few more are of the list. I am told that one gentleman in the shire of Aberdeen, *viz.* Sir Archibald Grant, has planted above fifty millions of trees on a piece of very wild ground at Monimusk. I must enquire if he has fenced them well, before he enters my list, for, that is the soul of enclosing. I began myself to plant a little, our ground being too valuable for much, and that is now fifty years ago, and the trees, now in my seventy-fourth year, I look up to with reverence, and shew them to my eldest son, now in his fifteenth year, that they are full the height of my country-house here, where I had the pleasure of receiving you, and hope again to have that satisfaction with our mutual friend, Mr Boswell. I shall always continue with the truest esteem, dear Doctor,

"Your much obliged, and obedient humble servant,

"ALEXANDER DICK."*

* For a character of this very amiable man, see "*Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*," 3d edit p 36

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—It is so long since I heard anything from you,^a that I am not easy about it, write something to me next post. When you sent your last letter every thing seemed to be mending, I hope nothing has lately grown worse. I suppose young Alexander continues to thrive, and Veronica is now very pretty company. I do not suppose the lady is yet reconciled to me, yet let her know that I love her very well, and value her very much.

"Dr Blair is printing some sermons. If they are all like the first, which I have read, they are *sermones aurei, ac auro magis aurei*. It is excellently written both as to doctrine and language. Mr Watson's book^b seems to be much esteemed

* * * * *

"Poor Beauclerk still continues very ill. Langton lives on as he is used to do. His children are very pretty, and, I think, his lady loses her Scotch. Paolo I never see.

"I have been so distressed by difficulty of breathing, that I lost, as was computed, six-and-thirty ounces of blood in a few days. I am better, but not well.

"I wish you would be vigilant and get me Graham's 'Telema-chus' that was printed at Glasgow, a very little book, and 'Johnstoni Poemata,' another little book, printed at Middleburg.

"Mrs Williams sends her compliments, and promises that when you come hither, she will accommodate you as well as ever she can in the old room. She wishes to know whether you sent her book to Sir Alexander Gordon.

"My dear Boswell, do not neglect to write to me, for your kindness is one of the pleasures of my life, which I should be very sorry to lose. I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

SAM JOHNSON.

"Feb 18, 1777"

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON

"Edinburgh, Feb 24, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter dated the 18th instant, I had the pleasure to receive last post. Although my late long neglect, or rather delay was truly culpable, I am tempted not to regret it, since it has produced me so valuable a proof of your regard. I did indeed, during that inexcusable silence, sometimes divert the

^a By the then course of the post my long letter of the 14th had not yet reached him

^b History of Philip the Second

reproaches of my own mind, by fancying that I should hear again from you, inquiring with some anxiety about me, because, for aught you knew, I might have been ill

"You are pleased to shew me, that my kindness is of some consequence to you. My heart is elated at the thought. Be assured, my dear Sir, that my affection and reverence for you are exalted and steady. I do not believe that a more perfect attachment ever existed in the history of mankind. And it is a noble attachment, for the attractions are Genius, Learning, and Piety.

"Your difficulty of breathing alarms me, and brings into my imagination an event, which although in the natural course of things, I must expect at some period, I cannot view with composure

* * * * *

"My wife is much honoured by what you say of her. She begs you may accept of her best compliments. She is to send you some marmalade of oranges of her own making

* * * * *

"I ever am, my dear Sir,

Your most obliged

And faithful humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL"

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq

"DEAR SIR,—I have been much pleased with your late letter, and am glad that my old enemy, Mrs Boswell, begins to feel some remorse. As to Miss Veronica's Scotch, I think it cannot be helped. An English maid you might easily have, but she would still imitate the greater number, as they would be likewise those whom she must most respect. Her dialect will not be gross. Her Mamma has not much Scotch, and you have yourself very little. I hope she knows my name and does not call me *Johnston*.

'The immediate cause of my writing is this.—One Shaw, who seems a modest and a decent man, has written an Erse Grammar, which a very learned Highlander, Macbean, has, at my request, examined and approved.

"The book is very little, but Mr Shaw has been persuaded by his friends to set it at half a guinea, though I had advised only a crown, and thought myself liberal. You, whom the authour considers as a great encourager of ingenious men, will receive a parcel

Cor et Ad—Line 30. On "*Johnston*" put the following note—"Johnson is the most common English formation of the surname from *John*, *Johnston* the Scotch. My illustrious friend observed that many North Britons pronounced his name in their own way."

of his proposals and receipts I have undertaken to give you notice of them, and to solicit your countenance You must ask no poor man, because the price is really too high. Yet such a work deserves patronage¹

"It is proposed to augment our club from twenty to thirty, of which I am glad, for as we have several in it whom I do not much like to consort with,* I am for reducing it to a mere miscellaneous collection of conspicuous men, without any determinate character

* * * * ' I am, dear Sir,

' Most affectionately yours,

" March 11, 1777

" SAM JOHNSON

" My respects to Madam, to Veronica, to Alexander, to Euphemia, to David."

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

" Edinburgh, April 4, 1777

[After informing him of the death of my little son David, and that I could not come to London this spring —]

"I think it hard that I should be a whole year without seeing you May I presume to petition for a meeting with you in the autumn? You have, I believe, seen all the cathedrals in England, except that of Carlisle If you are to be with Dr. Taylor, at Ashbourne, it would not be a great journey to come thither We may pass a few most agreeable days there by ourselves, and I will accompany you a good part of the way to the southward again Pray think of this

"You forget that Mr Shaw's Erse Grammar was put into your hands by myself last year Lord Eglintoune put it into mine I am glad that Mr Macbean approves of it I have received Mr Shaw's Proposals for its publication, which I can perceive are written by *the hand of a MASTER*

* * * * *

"Pray get for me all the editions of 'Walton's Lives' I have a notion that the re-publication of them with Notes will fall upon me, between Dr Horne and Lord Hailes."

* On account of their differing from him as to religion and politics

¹ Shaw published some recollections of Johnson, in which is described in detail the friendly encouragement he received By Johnson's advice, he travelled through the country, looking for Erse traditions "Sir," said the doctor, "if you give the world a vocabulary of that language,

while the island of Great Britam stands in the Atlantic Ocean, your name will be mentioned" When, however, it became known that he was patronized by Johnson, Macpherson had influence sufficient to prevent his receiving encouragement from the Highland Society

Mr. Shaw's Proposals† for "An Analysis of the Scotch Celtic Language," were thus illuminated by the pen of Johnson

"THOUGH the Erse dialect of the Celtic language has, from the earliest times, been spoken in Britain, and still subsists in the northern parts and adjacent islands, yet, by the negligence of a people rather warlike than lettered, it has hitherto been left to the caprice and judgement of every speaker, and has floated in the living voice, without the steadiness of analogy or direction of rules. An Erse Grammar is an addition to the stores of literature; and its authour hopes for the indulgence always shewn to those that attempt to do what was never done before. If his work shall be found defective, it is at least all his own. he is not like other grammarians, a compiler or transcriber, what he delivers, he has learned by attentive observation among his countrymen, who perhaps will be themselves surprized to see that speech reduced to principles, which they have used only by imitation.

"The use of this book will, however, not be confined to the mountains and islands, it will afford a pleasing and important subject of speculation, to those whose studies lead them to trace the affinity of languages, and the migrations of the ancient races of mankind."

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Glasgow, April 24, 1777

"MY DEAR SIR,—Our worthy friend Thrale's death having appeared in the newspapers, and been afterwards contradicted, I have been placed in a state of very uneasy uncertainty, from which I hoped to be relieved by you but my hopes have as yet been vain. How could you omit to write to me on such an occasion? I shall wait with anxiety.

"I am going to Auchinleck to stay a fortnight with my father. It is better not to be there very long at one time. But frequent renewals of attention are agreeable to him.

"Pray tell me about this edition of 'The English Poets, with a Preface, biographical and critical, to each Authour, by Samuel Johnson, LL D.' which I see advertised. I am delighted with the prospect of it. Indeed I am happy to feel that I am capable of being so much delighted with literature. But is not the charm of this publication chiefly owing to the *magnum nomen* in the front of it?

"What do you say of Lord Chesterfield's Memoirs and last Letters?

"My wife has made marmalade of oranges for you. I left her and my daughters and Alexander all well yesterday. I have taught Veronica to speak of you thus—Dr. Johnson, not Johnston. I remain, my dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate

"And obliged humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL "

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—The story of Mr. Thrale's death, as he had neither been sick nor in any other danger, made so little impression upon me, that I never thought about obviating its effects on any body else. It is supposed to have been produced by the English custom of making April fools, that is, of sending one another on some foolish errand on the first of April.

"Tell Mrs Boswell that I shall taste her marmalade cautiously at first, *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*. Beware, says the Italian proverb, of a reconciled enemy. But when I find it does me no harm, I shall then receive it and be thankful for it, as a pledge of firm, and I hope, of unalterable kindness. She is, after all, a dear, dear lady.

"Please to return Dr Blair thanks for his sermons. The Scotch write English wonderfully well

* * * * *

"Your frequent visits to Auchinleck, and your short stay there are very laudable and very judicious. Your present concord with your father gives me great pleasure, it was all that you seemed to want.

"My health is very bad, and my nights are very unquiet. What can I do to mend them? I have for this summer nothing better in prospect than a journey into Staffordshire and Derbyshire, perhaps with Oxford and Birmingham in my way.

"Make my compliments to Miss Veronica, I must leave it to *her* philosophy to comfort you for the loss of little David. You must remember, that to keep three out of four is more than your share. Mrs. Thrale has but four out of eleven.

"I am engaged to write little *Lives*, and little *Prefaces*, to a little edition of the English Poets. I think I have persuaded the booksellers to insert something of Thomson, and if you could give me some information about him, for the life which we have is very scanty, I should be glad. I am, dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"May 3, 1777 "

To those who delight in tracing the progress of works of literature, it will be an entertainment to compare the limited design with the ample execution of that admirable performance, "The Lives of the English Poets," which is the richest, most beautiful, and indeed most perfect production of his pen. His notion of it at this time appears in the preceding letter. He has a memorandum in this year, "29 May, Laster Eve, I treated with booksellers on a bargain, but the time was not long." The bargain was concerning that undertaking, but his tender conscience seems alarmed lest it should have intruded too much on his devout preparation for the solemnity of the ensuing day. But, indeed, very little time was necessary for Johnson's concluding a treaty with the Booksellers, as he had, I believe, less attention to profit from his labours than any man to whom literature has been a profession. I shall here insert from a letter to me from a late worthy friend Mr Edward Dilly, though of a later date, an account of this plan so happily conceived since it was the occasion of procuring for us an elegant collection of the best biography and criticism of which our language can boast.

To JAMES BOSWELL Esq

Southill Sept 26 1777

"DEAR SIR,—You will find by this letter, that I am still in the same calm retreat, from the noise and bustle of London, as when I wrote to you last. I am happy to find you had such an agreeable meeting with your old friend Dr Johnson, I have no doubt your stock is much increased by the interview. Few men, nay I may say, scarcely any man has got that fund of knowledge and entertainment is Dr Johnson in conversation. When he opens freely, every one is attentive to what he says and cannot fail of improvement as well as pleasure.

"The edition of the Poets, now printing will do honour to the English press and a concise account of the life of each author, by Dr Johnson, will be a very valuable addition, and stamp the reputation of this edition superior to any thing that is gone before. The first cause that gave rise to this undertaking, I believe was owing to the little trifling edition of the Poets, printing by the Martins, at Edinburgh, and to be sold by Bell, in London. Upon examining the volumes which were printed the type was found so extremely small, that many persons could not read them, not only this inconvenience attended it, but the inaccuracy of the press was very conspicuous. These reasons, as well as the idea of an invasion of what we call our Literary Property, induced the London Booksellers to print an

elegant and accurate edition of all the English Poets of reputation, from Chaucer to the present time

"Accordingly a select number of the most respectable booksellers met on the occasion, and, on consulting together, agreed, that all the proprietors of copy-right in the various Poets should be summoned together, and when their opinions were given, to proceed immediately on the business. Accordingly a meeting was held, consisting of about forty of the most respectable booksellers of London, when it was agreed that an elegant and uniform edition of 'The English Poets' should be immediately printed, with a concise account of the life of each authour, by Dr Samuel Johnson, and that three persons should be deputed to wait upon Dr Johnson, to solicit him to undertake the Lives, viz T. Davies, Strahan, and Cadell. The Doctor very politely undertook it, and seemed exceedingly pleased with the proposal. As to the terms, it was left entirely to the Doctor to name his own. he mentioned two hundred guineas it was immediately agreed to, and a farther compliment, I believe, will be made him. A committee was likewise appointed to engage the best engravers, viz Bartolozzi, Sherwin, Hall, &c. Likewise another committee for giving directions about the paper, printing, &c so that the whole will be conducted with spirit, and in the best manner, with respect to authourship, editorship, engraving, &c &c. My brother will give you a list of the Poets we mean to give, many of which are within the time of the Act of Queen Anne which Martin and Bell cannot give, as they have no property in them, the proprietors are almost all the booksellers in London of consequence. I am, dear Sir,

"Ever yours,

"EDWARD DILLY."

I shall afterwards have occasion to consider the extensive and varied range which Johnson took, when he was once led upon ground which he trod with a peculiar delight, having long been intimately acquainted with all the circumstances of it that could interest and please.

Dr JOHNSON to CHARLES O'CONOR, Esq^r

"SIR,—Having had the pleasure of conversing with Dr Campbell about your character and your literary undertaking, I am resolved to gratify myself by renewing a correspondence which began and

* Mr Waller, of the Treasury, Dublin, who obligingly communicated to me this and a former letter from Dr Johnson to the same gentleman (for which see Vol 1 page 177) writes to me as follows —"Perhaps it would gratify you to have some account of Mr. O'Conor. He is an amiable, learned, venerable old gentleman, of an

ended a great while ago, and ended, I am afraid, by my fault; a fault which, if you have not forgotten it, you must now forgive.

"I have ever disappointed you, give me leave to tell you, that you have likewise disappointed me. I expected great discoveries in Irish antiquity, and large publications in the Irish language, but the world still remains as it was, doubtful and ignorant. What the Irish language is in itself, and to what languages it has affinity, are very interesting questions, which every man wishes to see resolved that has any philological or historical curiosity. Dr. Leland begins his history too late: the ages which deserve an exact enquiry are those times (for such there were¹) when Ireland was the school of the west, the quiet habitation of sanctity and literature. If you could give a history, though imperfect, of the Irish nation, from its conversion to Christianity to the invasion from England, you would amplify knowledge with new views and new objects. Set about it, therefore, if you can: do what you can easily do without anxious exactness. Lay the foundation, and leave the superstructure to posterity. I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"May 19, 1777"

Early in this year came out, in two volumes quarto, the posthumous works of the learned Dr. Zachary Pearce, Bishop of Rochester, being "A Commentary, with Notes, on the four Evangelists and the Acts of the Apostles," with other theological pieces. Johnson had now an opportunity of making a grateful return to that excellent prelate, who, we have seen, was the only person who gave him any assistance in the compilation of his Dictionary. The Bishop had left some account of his life and character, written by himself. To this Johnson made some valuable additions,[†] and also furnished to the editor, the Reverend Mr. Derby, a Dedication,[†] which I shall here insert, both because it will appear at this time with peculiar

independent fortune: who lives at Belinquin in the county of Roscommon, he is an admired writer, and Member of the Irish Academy. The above Letter is alluded to in the Preface to the 2d edit. of his Dissertation, p. 3.

Cor. et Ad.—To the note add: "Mr. O'Connor has since died at the age of eighty-two," July 1, 1791. See a well drawn character of him in the Gentleman's Magazine for August, 1791."

¹ In his "History of Ireland" Dr. Campbell has printed this passage "if such there were" and Mr. Croker would seem to be right in supposing that to be the true version. Dr. Campbell who carried

the letter was an enthusiastic patriot, and not likely to have made a mistake to the prejudice of his country. The qualification, too, is more in Johnson's stately manner.

propriety, and because it will tend to propagate and increase that "favour of *Loyalty*," which in me, who boast of the name of *Tory*, is not only a principle but a passion.

TO THE KING

"SIR,—I presume to lay before your Majesty the last labours of a learned Bishop, who died in the toils and duties of his calling. He is now beyond the reach of all earthly honours and rewards, and only the hope of inciting others to imitate him, makes it now fit to be remembered, that he enjoyed in his life the favour of your Majesty.

"The tumultuary life of Princes seldom permits them to survey the wide extent of national interest, without losing sight of private merit to exhibit qualities which may be imitated by the highest and the humblest of mankind, and to be at once amiable and great

"Such characters, if now and then they appear in history, are contemplated with admiration. May it be the ambition of all your subjects to make haste with their tribute of reverence, and as posterity may learn from your Majesty how Kings should live, may they learn, likewise, from your people, how they should be honoured. I am,

"May it please your Majesty,

"With the most profound respect,

"Your Majesty's

"Most dutiful and devoted

"Subject and servant"

In the summer he wrote a Prologue* which was spoken before "A Word to the Wise," a comedy by Mr Hugh Kelly, which had been brought upon the stage in 1770, but its design being supposed favourable to the ministry, it fell a sacrifice to popular fury, and, in the playhouse phrase, was *damned*. By the generosity of Mr Harris, the proprietor of Covent Garden theatre, it was now exhibited for one night, for the benefit of the authours widow and children. To conciliate the favour of the audience was the intention of Johnson's Prologue, which, as it is not long, I shall here insert, as a proof that his poetical talents were in no degree impaired

"This night presents a play, which publick rage,
Or right or wrong, once hooted from the stage

Cor et Ad—Line 11 from the foot. After "its design being supposed favourable to the ministry," read, "he being a writer for ministry in one of the newspapers."

From zeal, or malice, now no more we dread,
 For English vengeance *was not with the dead*.
 A generous too regards with pitying eye
 The man whom Fate has laid where all must lie,
 To wit, reviving from its authour's dust,
 Be kind, ye judges, or at least be just :
 Let no renew'd hostilities invade
 The oblivious grave's inviolable shade
 Let one great payment every claim appease,
 And him who cannot hurt, allow to please,
 To please by scenes, unconscious of offence,
 By harmless merriment or useful sense
 Where aught of bright or fair the piece displays,
 Approve it only—'tis too late to praise
 If want of skill or want of care appear,
 Forbear to hiss,—the poet cannot hear
 By all, like him, must praise and blame be found.
 At last a fleeting gleam, or empty sound
 Yet then shall calm reflection bless the night,
 When liberal pity dignified delight,
 When pleasure find her torch at virtue's flame,
 And mirth was bounty with an humbler name "

A circumstance which could not fail to be very pleasing to Johnson, occurred this year. The Tragedy of "Sir Thomas Overbury," written by his early companion in London, Richard Savage, was brought out with alterations at Drury lane theatre¹. The Prologue to it was written by Mr Richard Brindsley Sheridan, in which, after describing very pathetically the wretchedness of

" Ill fated Savage, at whose birth was giv'n
 No parent but the Muse, no friend but Heaven : "

he concluded with an elegant compliment to Johnson on his Dictionary, that wonderful performance which cannot be too often or too highly praised, of which Mr. Harris, in his "Philological Inquiries," justly and liberally observes, "Such is its merit, that our language does not possess a more copious, learned, and valuable work." The concluding lines of this Prologue were these :

" So pleads the tale^a that gives to future times
 The son's misfortunes and the parent's crime^b,"

^a Part First, Chap 4

^b "Life of Richard Savage, by Dr Johnson"

"*et ad*" Line 31 For "concluded with 'read,' introduced."

¹ Not at Drury lane, but at Covent garden Theatre

There shall his name (if own'd to-night) survive,
Fix'd by THE HAND THAT HIDES OUR LANGUAGE LIVE'

Mr Sheridan here at once did honour to his taste and to his liberality of sentiment, by shewing that he was not prejudiced from the unlucky difference which had taken place between his worthy father and Dr. Johnson. I have already mentioned, that Johnson was very desirous of reconciliation with old Mr. Sheridan. It will, therefore, not seem at all surprizing that he was zealous in acknowledging the brilliant merit of his son. While it had as yet been displayed only in the drama, Johnson proposed him as a member of THE LITERARY CLUB, observing that "He who has written the two best comedies of his age, is surely a considerable man." And he had, accordingly, the honour to be elected, for an honour it undoubtedly must be allowed to be, when it is considered of whom that society consists, and that a single black ball excludes a candidate.

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

"June 9 1777

"MY DEAR SIR,—For the health of my wife and children I have taken the little country-house at which you visited my uncle, Dr Boswell, who, having lost his wife, is gone to live with his son. We took possession of our villa about a week ago. we have a garden of three quarters of an acre, well stocked with fruit trees and flowers, and gooseberries and currants, and pease and beans, and cabbages, &c &c and my children are quite happy. I now write to you in a little study, from the window of which I see around me a verdant grove, and beyond it the lofty mountain, called Arthur's Seat.

"Your last letter, in which you desire me to send you some additional information concerning Thomson, reached me very fortunately just as I was going to Lanark, to put my wife's two nephews, the young Campbells, to school there, under the care of Mr Thomson, the master of it, whose wife is sister to the authour of the Seasons. She is an old woman, but her memory is very good, and she will with pleasure give me for you every particular that you wish to know, and she can tell. Pray then take the trouble to send me such questions as may lead to biographical materials. You say that the Life which we have of Thomson is scanty. Since I received your letter, I have read his Life, published under the name of Cibber, but as you told me, really written by a Mr. Shiels, that written by Dr Murdoch, one prefixed to an edition of the 'Seasons,' published at Edinburgh,

which is compounded of both, with the addition of an anecdote of Quin's relieving Thomson from prison; the abridgement of Murdoch's life of him, in the 'Biographia Britannica,' and another abridgement of it in the 'Biographical Dictionary,' enriched with Dr Joseph Warton's critical panegyrick on the 'Seasons' in his 'Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope' from all these it appears to me that we have a pretty full account of this poet. However, you will, I doubt not, shew me many blanks, and I shall do what can be done to have them filled up. As Thomson never returned to Scotland, (which *you* will think very wise,) his sister can speak from her own knowledge only as to the early part of his life. She has some letters from him, which may probably give light as to his more advanced progress, if she will let us see them, which I suppose she will. I believe George Lewis Scott and Dr Armstrong are now his only surviving companions, while he lived in and about London, and they, I dare say, can tell more of him than is yet known. My own notion is, that Thomson was a much coarser man than his friends are willing to acknowledge. His 'Seasons' are indeed full of elegant and pious sentiments but a rank soil, nay a dunghill, will produce beautiful flowers.

"Your edition of the 'English Poets' will be very valuable, on account of the 'Prefaces and Lives.' But I have seen a specimen of an edition of the Poets at the Apollo press, at Edinburgh, which, for excellence in printing and engraving, highly deserves a liberal encouragement.

"Most sincerely do I regret the bad health and bad rest with which you have been afflicted, and I hope you are better. I cannot believe that the prologue which you generously gave to Mr Kelly's widow and children the other day, is the effusion of one in sickness and in disquietude, but external circumstances are never sure indications of the state of man. I send you a letter which I wrote to you two years ago at Wilton, and did not send at the time, for fear of being reproved as indulging too much tenderness, and one written to you at the tomb of Melancthon, which I kept back, lest I should appear at once too superstitious and too enthusiastick. I now imagine that perhaps they may please you.

"You do not take the least notice of my proposal for our meeting at Carlisle. Though I have meritoriously refrained from visiting

Cor et Ad—Line 39. On "Carlisle" put the following note—"Dr Johnson had himself talked of our seeing Carlisle together. *High* was a favourite word of his to denote a person of rank. He said to me, 'Sir, I believe we may meet at the house of a Roman Catholic lady in Cumberland, a high lady. Sir.' I afterwards dis-

London this year, I ask you if it would not be wrong that I should be two years without having the benefit of your conversation, when, if you come down as far as Derbyshire, we may meet at the expence of a few days journeying, and not many pounds I wish you to see Carlisle, which made me mention that place But if you have not a desire to complete your tour of the English cathedrals, I will take a larger share of the road between this place and Ashbourne. So tell me *where* you will fix for our passing a few days by ourselves. Now don't cry 'foolish fellow,' or 'idle dog' Chain your humour, and let your kindness play.

"You will rejoice to hear that Miss Macleod, of Rasay, is married to Colonel Mure Campbell, an excellent man, with a pretty good estate of his own, and the prospect of having the Earl of Loudoun's fortune and honours Is not this a noble lot for our fair Hebridean? How happy am I that she is to be in Ayrshire We shall have the Laird of Rasay, and old Malcolm, and I know not how many gallant Macleods, and bagpipes, &c. &c. at Auchinleck. Perhaps you may meet them all there

"Without doubt you have read what is called '*The Life of David Hume*,' written by himself, with the letter from Dr. Adam Smith subjoined to it Is not this an age of daring effrontery? My friend Mr Anderson, Professor of Natural Philosophy at Glasgow, at whose house you and I supped, and to whose care Mr Windham, of Norfolk, was entrusted at that University, paid me a visit lately; and after we had talked with indignation and contempt of the poisonous productions with which this age is infested, he said there was now an excellent opportunity for Dr Johnson to step forth I agreed with him that you might knock Hume's and Smith's heads together, and make vain and ostentatious infidelity exceedingly ridiculous Would it not be worth your while to crush such noxious weeds in the moral garden?

"You have said nothing to me of Dr. Dodd I know not how you think on that subject, though the newspapers give us a saying of yours in favour of mercy to him But I own I am very desirous that the royal prerogative of remission of punishment, should be employed to exhibit an illustrious instance of the regard which GOD'S VICEGERENT will ever shew to piety and virtue. If for ten

covered that he meant Mrs Strickland, sister of Charles Townley, Esq whose very noble collection of statues and pictures is not more to be admired, than his extraordinary and polite readiness in shewing it, which I and several of my friends have agreeably experienced They who are possessed of valuable stores of gratification to persons of taste, should exercise their benevolence in imparting the pleasure Grateful acknowledgements are due to Welbore Ellis Agar, Esq for the liberal access which he is pleased to allow to his exquisite collection of pictures "

righteous men the ALMIGHTY would have spared Sodom, shall not a thousand acts of goodness done by Dr Dodd counterbalance one crime? Such an instance would do more to encourage goodness, than his execution would do to deter from vice. I am not afraid of any bad consequence to society, for who will persevere for a long course of years in a distinguished discharge of religious duties, with a view to commit a forgery with impunity?

"Pray make my best compliments acceptable to Mr. and Mrs Thrale, by assuring them of my hearty joy that the *Master* as you call him is alive. I hope I shall often taste his Champagne—sobriety

"I have not heard from Langton for a long time. I suppose he is as usual,

'Studious the busy moments to deceive.'

* * * * *

"I remain, my dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate

"And faithful humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL"

On the 23d of June, I again wrote to Dr Johnson, enclosing a ship master's receipt for a jar of marmalade of oranges, and a large packet of Lord Hailes's "*Annals of Scotland*"

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq

"DEAR SIR,—I have just received your packet from Mr Thrale's, but have not day light enough to look much into it. I am glad that I have credit enough with Lord Hailes to be trusted with more copy. I hope to take more care of it than of the last. I return Mrs Boswell my affectionate thanks for her present, which I value as a token of reconciliation.

"Poor Dodd was put to death yesterday, in opposition to the recommendation of the jury—the petition of the city of London—and a subsequent petition signed by three-and twenty thousand hands. Surely the voice of the publick when it calls so loudly, and calls only for mercy, ought to be heard.

"The saying that was given me in the papers I never spoke, but I wrote many of his petitions, and some of his letters. He applied to me very often. He was, I am afraid, long flattered with hopes of life, but I had no part in the dreadful delusion, for as soon as the King had signed his sentence, I obtained from Mr Chamier¹ an account of the disposition of the court towards him, with a declara-

¹ Then Under secretary of State

tion that there was *no hope even of a respite*. This letter immediately was laid before Dodd, but he believed those whom he wished to be right, as it is thought, till within three days of his end. He died with pious composure and resolution. I have just seen the Ordinary that attended him. His Address to his fellow-convicts offended the Methodists, but he had a Moravian with him much of his time. His moral character is very bad. I hope all is not true that is charged upon him. Of his behaviour in prison an account will be published.

"I give you joy of your country-house, and your pretty garden, and hope some time to see you in your felicity. I was much pleased with your two letters that had been kept so long in store,* and rejoice at Miss Rasay's advancement, and wish Sir Allan success.

"I hope to meet you somewhere towards the north, but am

* Since they have been so much honoured by Dr. Johnson I shall here insert them.

To Mr SAMUEL JOHNSON

"MY EVER DEAR AND MUCH-RESPECTED SIR—You know my solemn enthusiasm of mind. You love me for it, and I respect myself for it, because in so far I resemble Mr. Johnson. You will be agreeably surprized when you learn the reason of my writing this letter. I am at Wittenberg in Saxony. I am in the old church where the Reformation was first preached, and where some of the reformers lie interred. I cannot resist the serious pleasure of writing to Mr. Johnson from the Tomb of Melancthon. My paper rests upon the grave-stone of that great and good man, who was undoubtedly the worthiest of all the reformers. He wished to reform abuses which had been introduced into the Church, but had no private resentment to gratify. So mild was he, that when his aged mother consulted him with anxiety on the perplexing disputes of the times, he advised her 'to keep to the old religion.' At this tomb, then, my ever dear and respected friend, I vow to thee an eternal attachment. It shall be my study to do what I can to render your life happy; and, if you die before me, I shall endeavour to do honour to your memory, and, elevated by the remembrance of you, persist in noble piety. May God, the Father of all beings, ever bless you, and may you continue to love.

"Your most affectionate friend, and devoted servant,

"Sunday, Sept. 30, 1764."

"JAMES BOSWELL"

To Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON

"Wilton House, April 22, 1775

"MY DEAR SIR,—Every scene of my life confirms the truth of what you have told me—'there is no certain happiness in this state of being.'—I am here, amidst all that you know is at Lord Pembroke's, and yet I am weary and gloomy. I am just setting out for the house of an old friend in Devonshire, and shall not get back to London for a week yet. You said to me last Good-Friday, with a cordiality that warmed my heart, that if I came to settle in London, we should have a day fixed every week, to meet by ourselves and talk freely. To be thought worthy of such a privilege cannot but exalt me. During my present absence from you, while, notwithstanding the quiet which you allow me to possess, I am darkened by temporary clouds, I beg to have a few lines from you, a few lines merely of kindness, as a *viaticum* till I see you again. In your 'Vanity of human Wishes,' and in Parnell's 'Contentment,' I find the only sure means of enjoying happiness, or, at least, the hopes of happiness. I ever am, with reverence and affection,

"Most faithfully yours,

"JAMES BOSWELL"

lorth to come quite to Carlisle. Can we not meet it Manchester?
But we will settle it in some other letters.

"Mr. Seaward^a a great favourite at Streatham, has been, I think, unkindly by our travels with a curiosity to see the Highlands. I have given him letters to you and Beattie. He desires that a lodg^{ing} may be taken for him at Edinburgh, against his arrival. He is just setting out.

"Innerton has been exercising the militia. Mrs. Williams is, I fear declining. Dr. Lawrence says he can do no more. She is gone to summer in the country, with as many conveniences about her as she can expect, but I have no great hope. We must all die. May we all be prepared!

"I suppose Miss Bowell recds her book, and young Alexander takes to his learning. Let me hear about them, for every thing that belongs to you, belongs in a more remote degree, and not, I hope very remote to, dear Sir.

"Yours affectionately,

"SAM JOHNSON.

June 25 1777."

To the son

"DEAR SIR. This gentleman is a great favourite at Streatham, and therefore you will easily believe that he has very valuable qualities. Our relative has kindled him with a desire of visiting the Highlands after having already seen a great part of Europe. You must receive him at the end and when you have directed him to the curiosities of Edinburgh, give him instructions and recommendations for the rest of his journey. I am dear Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

June 24 1777."

Johnson's benevolence to the unfortunate was I am confident, as steady and active as that of any of those who have been most eminently distinguished for that virtue. Innumerable proofs of it I have no doubt will be for ever concealed from mortal eyes. We may, however, form some judgment of it, from the many and very various instances which have been discovered. One which happened in the course of this summer is remarkable from the name and connection of the person who was the object of

^a William Seaward, Esq. well known to a numerous and valuable acquaintance for his literary love of the fine arts and social virtues. I am indebted to him for several communications concerning Johnson.

it The circumstance to which I allude is ascertained by two letters, one to Mr Langton, and another to the Reverend Dr Vyve, rector of Lambeth, son of the respectable clergyman at Lichfield, who was contemporary with Johnson, and in whose father's family Johnson had the happiness of being kindly received in his early years

Dr JOHNSON to BIVVET LANGTON, Esq

"DEAR SIR,—I have lately been much disordered by a difficulty of breathing, but am now better I hope your house is well

"You know we have been talking lately of St Cross at Winchester, I have an old acquaintance whose distress makes him very desirous of an hospital, and I am afraid I have not strength enough to get him into the Chartreux He is a painter, who never rose higher than to get his immediate living, and from that, at eighty-three, he is disabled by a slight stroke of the palsy, such as does not make him at all helpless on common occasions, though his hand is not steady enough for his art

"My request is, that you will try to obtain a promise of the next vacancy, from the Bishop of Chester It is not a great thing to ask, and I hope we shall obtain it. Dr Warton has promised to favour him with his notice, and I hope he may end his days in peace I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON

"June 29, 1777"

To the Reverend Dr VYVE, at Lambeth

"SIR,—I doubt not but you will readily forgive me for taking the liberty of requesting your assistance in recommending an old friend to his Grace the Archbishop, as Governour of the Charterhouse

"His name is De Groot, he was born at Gloucester, I have known him many years He has all the common claims to charity, being old, poor, and infirm, in a great degree He has likewise another claim, to which no scholar can refuse attention, he is by several descents the nephew of Hugo Grotius, of him, from whom perhaps every man of learning has learned something Let it not be said that in any lettered country a nephew of Grotius asked a charity and was refused I am, reverend Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"July 19, 1777"

Kit Dr VYSE to Mr Boswell.

' Lambeth, June 9, 1787

"SIR,—I have searched in vain for the letter which I spoke of, and which I wished, at your desire, to communicate to you. It was from Dr Johnson, to return me thanks for my application to Archbishop Cornwallis in favour of poor De Groot. He rejoices at the success it met with, and is lavish in the praise he bestows upon his favourite, Hugo Grotius. I am really sorry that I cannot find this letter, as it is worthy of the writer. That which I send you enclosed * is at your service. It is very short, and will not perhaps be thought of any consequence; unless you should judge proper to consider it as a proof of the very humane part which Dr. Johnson took in behalf of a distressed and deserving person. I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"W VYSE "

Dr JOHNSON to Mr EDWARD DILLY¹

"SIR,—To the collection of English Poets, I have recommended the volume of Dr Watts to be added, his name has long been held by me in veneration, and I would not willingly be reduced to tell of him only that he was born and died. Yet of his life I know very little, and therefore must pass him in a manner very unworthy of his character, unless some of his friends will favour me with the necessary information, many of them must be known to you, and by your influence, perhaps I may obtain some instruction: My plan does not exact much, but I wish to distinguish Watts, a man who never wrote but for a good purpose. Be pleased to do for me what you can. I am, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street,
' July 7, 1777."

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON.

Edinburgh, July 15, 1777

"MY DEAR SIR,—The fate of Dr. Dodd made a dismal impression upon my mind

* * * * *

"I had sagacity enough to divine that you wrote his speech to the Recorder before sentence was pronounced. I am glad you have

* The preceding letter

¹ Mr Croker notes that this letter was really addressed to a Mr Sharp, who was in possession of Watts' papers

written so much for him, and I hope to be favoured with an exact list of the several pieces when we meet

"I received Mr Seward as the friend of Mr and Mrs Thrale, and as a gentleman recommended by Dr. Johnson to my attention. I have introduced him to Lord Kames, Lord Monboddo, and Mr. Nairne. He is gone to the Highlands with Dr. Gregory, when he returns I shall do more for him.

"Sir Allan Maclean has carried that branch of his cause of which we had good hopes the President and one other Judge only were against him. I wish the House of Lords may do as well as the Court of Session has done. But Sir Allan has not the lands of *Brolos* quite clear by this judgement, till a long account is made up of debts and interests on the one side, and rents on the other. I am, however, not much afraid of the balance

"Macquarry's estates, Staffa and all, were sold yesterday, and bought by a Campbell. I fear he will have little or nothing left out of the purchase money.

"I send you the case against the negro, by Mr Cullen, son to Dr Cullen, in opposition to Maclaurin's for liberty, of which you have approved. Pray read this, and tell me what you think as a *Politician*, as well as a *Poet*, upon the subject

"Be so kind as to let me know how your time is to be distributed next autumn. I will meet you at Manchester, or where you please, but I wish you would complete your tour of the cathedrals, and come to Carlisle, and I will accompany you a part of the way homewards. I am ever

"Most faithfully yours,

"JAMES BOSWELL"

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq

"DEAR SIR,—Your notion of the necessity of an yearly interview is very pleasing to both my vanity and tenderness. I shall, perhaps, come to Carlisle another year; but my money has not held out so well as it used to do. I shall go to Ashbourne, and I purpose to make Dr. Taylor invite you. If you live awhile with me at his house, we shall have much time to ourselves, and our stay will be no expense to us or him. I shall leave London the 28th, and after some stay at Oxford and Lichfield, shall probably come to Ashbourne about the end of your Session, but of all this you shall have notice. Be satisfied we will meet somewhere

"What passed between me and poor Dr Dodd you shall know more fully when we meet.

"Of lawsuits there is no end, poor Sir Allan must have another

trial, for which, however, his antagonist cannot be much blamed, having two judges on his side. I am more afraid of the debts than of the House of Lords. It is scarcely to be imagined to what debts will swell, that are daily encreasing by small additions, and how carelessly in a state of desperation debts are contracted. Poor Macquarry was far from thinking that when he sold his islands he should receive nothing. For what were they sold? And what was their yearly value? The admission of money into the Highlands will soon put an end to the feudal modes of life, by making those men landlords who were not chiefs. I do not know that the people will suffer by the change, but there was in the patriarchal authority something venerable and pleasing. Every eye must look with pain on a Campbell turning the *Macquarries* at will out of their *sedes avita*, their hereditary island.

"Sir Alexander Dick is the only Scotsman liberal enough not to be angry that I could not find trees, where trees were not. I was much delighted by his kind letter.

"I remember Rasay with too much pleasure not to partake of the happiness of any part of that amiable family. Our ramble in the islands hangs upon my imagination, I can hardly help imagining that we shall go again. Pennant seems to have seen a great deal which we did not see. When we travel again let us look better about us.

"You have done right in taking your uncle's house. Some change in the form of life, gives from time to time a new epocha of existence. In a new place there is something new to be done, and a different system of thoughts rises in the mind. I wish I could gather currants in your garden. Now fit up a little study, and have your books ready at hand, do not spare a little money, to make your habitation pleasing to yourself.

"I have dined lately with poor dear ———. I do not think he goes on well. His table is rather coarse, and he has his children too much about him. But he is a very good man.

"Mrs. Williams is in the country to try if she can improve her health, she is very ill. Matters have come so about that she is in

* This very just remark I hope will be constantly held in remembrance by parents, who are in general too apt to indulge their own fond feelings for their children at the expense of their friends. The common custom of introducing them after dinner is highly injudicious. It is agreeable enough that they should appear at any other time, but they should not be suffered to poison the moments of festivity by attracting the attention of the company, and in a manner compelling them from politeness to say what they do not think.

¹ That this refers to Langton is evident from the third paragraph of the letter of August 4.

the country with very good accommodation, but, age and sickness, and pride, have made her so peevish that I was forced to bribe the maid to stay with her, by a secret stipulation of half a crown a week over her wages.

"Our club ended its session about six weeks ago. We now only meet to dine once a fortnight. Mr Dunning, the great lawyer, is one of our members. The Thrales are well.

"I long to know how the Negro's cause will be decided. What is the opinion of Lord Auchinleck, or Lord Hailes, or Lord Monboddo? I am, dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate, &c

"July 22, 1777 "

"SAM JOHNSON

Dr JOHNSON to Mrs BOSWELL

"MADAM—Though I am well enough pleased with the taste of sweetmeats, very little of the pleasure which I received at the arrival of your jar of marmalade arose from eating it. I received it as a token of friendship, as a proof of reconciliation, things much sweeter than sweetmeats, and upon this consideration I return you, dear Madam, my sincerest thanks. By having your kindness I think I have a double security for the continuance of Mr Boswell's, which it is not to be expected that any man can long keep, when the influence of a lady so highly and so justly valued operates against him. Mr Boswell will tell you, that I was always faithful to your interest, and always endeavoured to exalt you in his estimation. You must now do the same for me. We must all help one another, and you must now consider me, as, dear Madam,

"Your most obliged,

"And most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON

"July 22, 1777 "

Mrs BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

"Edinburgh, July 28, 1777

"MY DEAR SIR,—This is the day on which you were to leave London, and I have been amusing myself in the intervals of my law-drudgery, with figuring you in the Oxford post-coach. I doubt, however, if you have had so merry a journey as you and I had in that vehicle last year, when you made so much sport with Gwyn, the architect. Incidents upon a journey are recollected with peculiar pleasure, they are preserved in brisk spirits, and come up again in our minds, tinctured with that gaiety, or at least that animation with which we first perceived them "

* * * * *

[I added, that something had occurred, which I was afraid might prevent me from meeting him, and that my wife had been affected with complaints which threatened a consumption, but was now better]

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—Do not disturb yourself about our interviews; I hope we shall have many, nor think it any thing hard or unusual, that your design of meeting me is interrupted. We have both endured greater evils, and have greater evils to expect.

"Mrs Boswell's illness makes a more serious distress. Does the blood rise from her lungs or from her stomach? From little vessels broken in the stomach there is no danger. Blood from the lungs is, I believe, always frothy, as mixed with wind. Your physicians know very well what is to be done. The loss of such a lady would, indeed, be very afflictive, and I hope she is in no danger. Take care to keep her mind as easy as is possible.

"I have left Langton in London. He has been down with the militia, and is again quiet at home, talking to his little people, as, I suppose, you do sometimes. Make my compliments to Miss Veronica. The rest are too young for ceremony.

"I cannot but hope that you have taken your country-house at a very reasonable time, and that it may conduce to restore, or establish Mrs Boswell's health, as well as provide room and exercise for the young ones. That you and your lady may both be happy, and long enjoy your happiness, is the sincere and earnest wish of, dear Sir,

"Your most, &c.

"SAM JOHNSON.

"Oxford Aug 4, 1777"

Mr. BOSWELL to Dr. JOHNSON

[Informing him that my wife had continued to grow better, so that my alarming apprehensions were relieved, and that I hoped to disengage myself from the other embarrassment which had occurred, and therefore requesting to know particularly when he intended to be at Ashbourne.]

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—I am this day come to Ashbourne, and have only to tell you, that Dr Taylor says you shall be welcome to him, and you know how welcome you will be to me. Make haste to let me know when you may be expected.

" Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and tell her, I hope we shall be at variance no more I am, dear Sir,

" Your most humble servant,

" SAM JOHNSON.

" August 30, 1777 "

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

" DEAR SIR,—On Saturday I wrote a very short letter, immediately upon my arrival hither, to shew you that I am not less desirous of the interview than yourself Life admits not of delays, when pleasure can be had it is fit to catch it. Every hour takes away part of the things that please us, and perhaps part of our disposition to be pleased When I came to Lichfield, I found my old friend Harry Jackson dead. It was a loss, and a loss not to be repaired, as he was one of the companions of my childhood I hope we may long continue to gain friends, but the friends which merit or usefulness can procure us, are not able to supply the place of old acquaintance, with whom the days of youth may be retraced, and those images revived which gave the earliest delight If you and I live to be much older, we shall take great delight in talking over the Hebridean Journey

" In the mean time it may not be amiss to contrive some other little adventure, but what it can be I know not, leave it, as Sidney says,

'To virtue, fortune, wine, and woman's breast,'¹

for I believe Mrs Boswell must have some part in the consultation.

" One thing you will like The Doctor, so far as I can judge, is likely to leave us enough to ourselves He was out to-day before I came down, and, I fancy, will stay out till dinner I have brought the papers about poor Dodd, to show you, but you will soon have dispatched them

" Before I came away I sent poor Mrs Williams into the country, very ill of a pituitous defluxion, which wastes her gradually away, and which her physician declares himself unable to stop. I supplied her as far as could be desired, with all conveniencies to make her excursion and abode pleasant and useful, but I am afraid she can only linger a short time in a morbid state of weakness and pain

" The Thrales, little and great, are all well, and purpose to go to

¹ The line should run
"To nature, fortune, time, and woman's
breast"

Johnson was often inaccurate in his poetical quotations

Brightelmston at Michaelmas They will invite me to go with them, and perhaps I may go, but I hardly think I shall like to stay the whole time, but of futurity we know but little

"Mrs. Porter is well, but Mrs. Aston, one of the ladies at Stow-hill, has been struck with a palsy, from which she is not likely ever to recover How soon may such a stroke fall upon us!

"Write to me, and let us know when we may expect you. I am, dear Sir,

"Your most humble servant"

"SAM JOHNSON.

"Ashbourne, Sept. 1, 1777."

Mr BOSWELL to Dr JOHNSON

Edinburgh, Sept. 9 1777

[After informing him that I was to set out next day, in order to meet him at Ashbourne —]

"I have a present for you from Lord Hales, the fifth book of 'Lactantius, which he has published with Latin notes. He is able to give you a few anecdotes for your 'Life of Thomson,' who I find was private tutor to the present Lord of Haddington Lord Hailes's cousin, a circumstance not mentioned by Dr Murdoch. I have been expectations of delight from your edition of the English Poets.

"I am sorry for poor Mrs. Williams's situation. You will however, have the comfort of reflecting on your kindness to her. Mr. Jackson's death, and Mrs. Aston's palsy, are gloomy circumstances. Yet surely we should be habituated to the uncertainty of life and health. When my mind is unclouded by melancholy, I consider the temporary distresses of this state of being, as light afflictions, by stretching my mental view into that glorious after existence when they will appear to be as nothing. But present pleasures and present pains must be felt. I lately read 'Rasselas' over again with great satisfaction.

"Since you are desirous to hear about Macquarry's sale I shall inform you particularly. The gentleman who purchased Ulva is Mr. Campbell, of Auchinlath. Our friend Macquarry was proprietor of two thirds of it, of which the rent was 156*l* 5*s* 10*d* $\frac{1}{2}$. This parcel was set up at 4,069*l* 15*s* 10*d*, but it sold for no less than 5,540*l*. The other third of Ulva with the island of Stafia, belonged to Macquarry of Oismaig. Its rent, including that of Stafia, 83*l* 12*s* 2*d* $\frac{1}{2}$ —set up at 2,178*l* 16*s* 4*d*—sold for no less than 3,540*l*. The Laird of Col wished to purchase Ulva, but he thought the price too high. There may, indeed, be great improvements made there, both in fishing and agriculture, but the interest of the

purchase money exceeds the rents so very much, that I doubt if the bargain will be profitable. There is an island called Little Colonsay, of 101 yearly rent, which I am informed has belonged to the Macquarrys of Ulva for many ages, but which was lately claimed by the Presbyterian Synod of Argyll, in consequence of a grant made to them by Queen Anne. It is believed that their claim will be dismissed, and that Little Colonsay will also be sold for the advantage of Macquarry's creditors. What think you of purchasing this island, and endowing a school or college there, the master to be a clergyman of the Church of England? How venerable would such an institution make the name of DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON in the Hebrides! I have, like yourself, a wonderful pleasure in recollecting our travels in those islands. The pleasure is, I think, greater than it reasonably should be, considering that we had not much either of beauty and elegance to charm our imaginations, or of rude novelty to astonish. Let us, by all means, have another expedition. I shrink a little from our scheme of going up the Baltick.* I am sorry you have already been in Wales for I wish to see it. Shall we go to Ireland, of which I have seen but little? We shall try to strike out a plan when we are at Ashbourne. I am ever

"Your most faithful humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL.

To JAMES BOSWELL Esq

"DEAR SIR—I write to be left at Carlisle, as you direct me, but you cannot have it. Your letter, dated Sept 6, was not at

* It appears that Johnson now in his sixty eighth year was seriously inclined to realise the project of our going up the Baltick, which I had stated when we were in the Isle of Sky, for he thus writes to Mrs. Thrale. Letters Vol I page 36

"Ashbourne Sept 13 1777

"BO WELL, I believe is coming. He talks of being here to day. I shall be glad to see him but he shrinks from the Baltick expedition which I think is the best scheme in our power what we shall substitute I know not. He wants to see Wales, but except the woods of *Bachyrat* he what is there in Wales that can fill the hunger of ignorance, or quench the thirst of curiosity? We may perhaps form some scheme or other, but, in the phrase of *Huckle in the II* 16, it is pity he has not a better bottom."

Such an ardour of mind, and vigour of enterprise is admirable at any age, but more particularly so at the advanced period at which Johnson was then arrived. I am sorry now that I did not insist on our executing that scheme. Besides the other objects of curiosity and observation to have seen my illustrious friend received, as he probably would have been, by a Prince so eminently distinguished for his variety of talents and acquisitions as the King of Sweden and by the Empress of Russia whose extraordinary abilities, information and magnanimity, astonish the world would have afforded a noble subject for contemplation and record. This reflection may possibly be thought too visionary by the more sedate and cold blooded part of my readers, yet I own, I frequently indulge it with an earnest, unavailing regret.

this place till this day, Thursday, Sept. 11, and I hope you will be here before this is at Carlisle.* However, what you have not going you may have returning, and as I believe I shall not love you less after our interview, it will then be as true as it is now, that I set a very high value upon your friendship, and count your kindness as one of the chief felicities of my life. Do not fancy that an intermission of writing is a decay of kindness. No man is always in a disposition to write, nor has any man at all times something to say.

"That distrust which intrudes so often on your mind is a mode of melancholy, which, if it be the business of a wise man to be happy, it is foolish to indulge, and if it be a duty to preserve our faculties entire for their proper use, it is criminal. Suspicion is very often an useless pain. From that and all other pains, I wish you free and safe, for I am, dear Sir,

"Most affectionately yours,

"SAM JOHNSON.

* Ashbourne Sept 11, 1777 "

On Sunday evening, September 14, I arrived at Ashbourne, and drove directly up to Dr Taylor's door. Dr Johnson and he appeared before I had got out of the post chaise, and welcomed me cordially.

I told them that I had travelled all the preceding night, and gone to bed at Leek, in Staffordshire, and that when I rose to go to church in the afternoon, I was informed there had been an earthquake, of which, it seems, the shock had been felt, in some degree, at Ashbourne. JOHNSON "Sir, it will be much exaggerated in popular talk. for, in the first place, the common people do not accurately adapt their thoughts to the objects, nor, secondly, do they accurately adapt their words to their thoughts. they do not mean to lie, but, taking no pains to be exact, they give you very false accounts. A great part of their language is proverbial. If any thing rocks at all, they say *it rocks like a candle*, and in this way they go on."

The subject of grief for the loss of relations and friends being introduced, I observed that it was strange to consider how soon it in general wears away. Dr Taylor mentioned a gentleman of the neighbourhood as the only instance he had ever known of a person who had endeavoured to *retain* grief. He told Dr Taylor, that after his lady's death, which affected him deeply, he *resolved* that the grief, which he cherished with a kind of sacred

* It so happened. The letter was forwarded to my house at Edinburgh.

fondness, should be lasting, but that he found he could not keep it long. JOHNSON "All grief for what cannot in the course of nature be helped, soon wears away, in some sooner, indeed, in some later, but it never continues very long, unless where there is madness, such as will make a man have pride so fixed in his mind, as to imagine himself a King, or any other passion in an unreasonable way for all unnecessary grief is unwise, and therefore will not be long retained by a sound mind. If, indeed, the cause of our grief is occasioned by our own misconduct, if grief is mingled with remorse of conscience, it should be lasting." BOSWELL "But, Sir, we do not approve of a man who very soon forgets the loss of a wife or a friend." JOHNSON "Sir, we disapprove of him, not because he soon forgets his grief, for the sooner it is forgotten the better, but because we suppose, that if he forgets his wife or his friend soon, he has not had much affection for them."

I was somewhat disappointed in finding that the edition of the English Poets, for which he was to write Prefaces and Lives, was not an undertaking directed by him, but that he was to furnish a Preface and Life to any poet the booksellers pleased. I asked him if he would do this to any dunce's works, if they should ask him. JOHNSON "Yes, Sir, and say he was a dunce." My friend seemed now not much to relish talking of this edition.

On Monday, September 15, Dr Johnson observed, that every body commended such parts of his "Journey to the Western Islands," as were in their own way. "For instance, (said he,) Mr Jackson (the all-knowing) told me, there was more good sense upon trade in it, than he should hear in the House of Commons in a year, except from Burke. Jones commended the part which treats of language, Burke that which describes the inhabitants of mountainous countries."

After breakfast, Johnson carried me to see the garden belonging to the school of Ashbourne, which is very prettily formed upon a bank, rising gradually behind the house. The Reverend Mr Langley, the head master, accompanied us.

While we sat basking in the sun upon a seat here, I introduced a common subject of complaint, the very small salaries which many curates have, and I maintained, "that no man should be invested with the character of a clergyman, unless he has a security for such an income as will enable him to appear respectable, that, therefore, a clergyman should not be allowed to have a curate, unless he gives him a hundred pounds a year, if he cannot do that, let him perform the duty himself." JOHNSON. "To be sure, Sir, it is wrong that

any clergyman should be without a reasonable income, but as the church revenues were sadly diminished at the Reformation, the clergy who have livings cannot afford, in many instances, to give good salaries to curates, without leaving themselves too little, and, if no curate were to be permitted, unless he had a hundred pounds a year, their number would be very small, which would be a disadvantage as then there would not be such choice in the nursery for the church, curates being candidates for the higher ecclesiastical office according to their merit and good behaviour" He explained the system of the English Hierarchy exceedingly well "It is not thought fit (said he) to trust a man with the care of a parish, till he has given proof as a curate that he shall deserve such a trust" This is an excellent *theory*, and if the *practice* were according to it, the Church of England would be admirable indeed However, as I have heard Dr Johnson observe as to the Universities, bad practice does not infer that the *constitution* is bad

We had with us at dinner several of Dr Taylor's neighbours, good civil gentlemen, who seemed to understand Dr Johnson very well, and not to consider him in the light that a certain person did, who being struck, or rather stunned by his voice and manner, when he was afterwards asked what he thought of him, answered, "He is a tremendous companion."

Johnson told me, that "Taylor was a very sensible acute man, and had a strong mind, that he had great activity in some respects, and yet such a sort of indolence, that if you should put a pebble upon his chimney piece you would find it there, in the same state, a year afterwards"

And here is the proper place to give an account of Johnson's humane and zealous interference in behalf of the Reverend Dr William Dodd, formerly Prie-bendary of Biecon, and chaplain in ordinary to his Majesty, celebrated as a very popular preacher, an encourager of charitable institutions, and authour of a variety of works, chiefly theological Having unhappily contracted expensive habits of living, partly occasioned by licentiousness of manners, he in an evil hour, when pressed by want of money, and dreading an exposure of his circumstances, forged a bond of which he attempted to avail himself to support his credit, flattering himself with hopes that he might be able to repay its amount without being detected. The person, whose name he thus rashly and criminally presumed to falsify, was the Earl of Chesterfield, to whom he had been tutor, and who, he perhaps, in the warmth of his feelings, flattered himself would have paid the money in case of an alarm being

taken, rather than suffer him to fall a victim to the dreadful consequences of violating the law against forgery, the most dangerous crime in a commercial country, but the unfortunate divine had the mortification to find that he was mistaken. His noble pupil appeared against him, and he was capitally convicted.¹

Johnson told me that Dr Dodd was very little acquainted with him, having been but once in his company, many years previous to this period (which was precisely the state of my own acquaintance with Dodd), but in his distress he bethought himself of Johnson's persuasive power of writing, if haply it might avail to obtain for him the royal mercy. He did not apply to him directly but, extraordinary as it may seem, through the late Countess of Harrington, who wrote a letter to Johnson, asking him to employ his pen in favour of Dodd. Mr Allen, the printer, who was Johnson's landlord and next neighbour in Bolt-court, and for whom he had much kindness, was one of Dodd's friends, of whom, to the credit of humanity be it recorded, that he had many who did not desert him, even after his infingement of the law had reduced him to the state of a man under sentence of death. Mr Allen told me that he carried Lady Harrington's letter to Johnson, that Johnson read it walking up and down his chamber, and seemed much agitated, after which he said "I will do what I can,—" and certainly he did make extraordinary exertions.

He this evening, as he had obligingly promised in one of his letters, put into my hands the whole series of his writings upon this melancholy occasion, and I shall present my readers with the abstract which I made from the collection, in doing which I studied to avoid copying what had appeared in print, and now make part of the edition of "Johnson's Works," published by the Booksellers of London, but taking care to mark Johnson's variations in some of the pieces there exhibited.

Dr. Johnson wrote in the first place, Dr Dodd's "Speech to the Recorder of London," at the Old-Bailey, when sentence of death was about to be pronounced upon him.

He wrote also "The Convict's Address to his unhappy Bretheren," a sermon delivered by Dr Dodd, in the chapel of Newgate. Ac-

¹ The unhappy doctor, when arrested, repaid nearly all the money he had received. For the balance, he executed a bill of sale on his furniture which was attested by Lord Chesterfield's solicitor. This certainly looks as though Lord Chesterfield had agreed to compound the matter. The case was, however, called on before the Lord Mayor before the

prosecutor had time to speak with him, and the affair had to take its course. This is what was urged by Lord Chesterfield's friends, but it seems difficult to understand why he could not have withdrawn. The case was often tainted with having "hung a parson"—See 'A Famous Forgery, or, the Story of the unfortunate Dr Dodd'."

cording to Johnson's manuscript it began thus after the text, *What shall I do to be saved?*—"These were the words with which the keeper, to whose custody Paul and Silas were committed by their prosecutors, addressed his prisoners, when he saw them freed from their bonds by the perceptible agency of divine favour, and was, therefore, irresistibly convinced that they were not offenders against the laws, but martyrs to the truth

Dr Johnson was so good as to mark for me with his own hand, on a copy of this sermon which is now in my possession, such passages as were added by Dr Dodd. They are not many. Whoever will take the trouble to look at the printed copy and attend to what I mention, will be satisfied of this.

There is a short introduction by Dr Dodd, and he also inserted this sentence, 'You see with what confusion and dishonour I now stand before you, — no more in the pulpit of instruction, but on this humble seat with yourselves.' The *notes* are entirely Dodd's own, and Johnson's writing ends at the words "the thief whom he pardoned on the cross." What follows was supplied by Dr Dodd himself.

The other pieces written by Johnson in the above mentioned collection are two letters, one to the Lord Chancellor Bathurst (not Lord North as is erroneously supposed) and one to Lord Mansfield, — A Petition from Dr Dodd to the King, — A Petition from Mrs Dodd to the Queen — Observations of some length inserted in the newspapers on occasion of Earl Percy's having presented to his Majesty a petition for mercy to Dodd signed by twenty thousand people, but all in vain. He told me that he had also written a petition from the city of London, "but (said he, with a significant smile) they *mended* it."

The last of these articles which Johnson wrote is 'Dr Dodd's last solemn Declaration,' which he left with the sheriff at the place of execution. Here also my friend marked the variations on a copy of that piece now in my possession. Dodd inserted 'I never knew or attended to the calls of frugality, or the needful minuteness of painful economy, and in the next sentence he introduced the words which I distinguish by *Italicks*, 'My life for some *few unhappy* years past has been *dreadfully erroneous*.' Johnson's expression was *hypocritical*, but his remark on the margin is "With this he said he could not charge himself."

Having thus authentically settled what part of the "Occasional Papers," concerning Dr Dodd's miserable situation, came from the pen of Johnson, I shall proceed to present my readers with my

Second Edition — City Petition inserted as a note on line 30

record of the unpublished writings relating to that extraordinary and interesting matter

I found a letter to Dr Johnson from Dr Dodd, May 23, 1777, in which "The Convict's Address" seems clearly to be meant

"I am so penetrated, my ever dear Sir, with a sense of your extreme benevolence towards me, that I cannot find words equal to the sentiments of my heart * * * * *

"You are too conversant in the world to need the slightest hint from me, of what infinite utility the Speech* on the awful day has been to me I experience, every hour, some good effect from it I am sure that effects still more salutary and important, must follow from *your kind and intended favour* I will labour,—God being my helper,—to do justice to it from the pulpit I am sure, had I your sentiments constantly to deliver from thence, in all their mighty force and power, not a soul could be left unconvinced and unpersuaded" * * * * *

He added, "May God ALMIGHTY bless and reward, with his choicest comforts, your philanthropick actions, and enable me at all times to express what I feel of the high and uncommon obligations which I owe to the *first man* in our times"

On Sunday, June 22, he writes, begging Dr Johnson's assistance in framing a supplicatory letter to his Majesty

"If his Majesty could be moved of his royal clemency to spare me and my family the horrors and ignominy of a *publick death*, which the *publick* itself is solicitous to wave, and to grant me in some silent distant corner of the globe, to pass the remainder of my days in penitence and prayer, I would bless his clemency and be humbled."

This letter was brought to Dr Johnson when in church He stooped down and read it, and wrote, when he went home, the following letter for Dr Dodd to the King

"SIR,—May it not offend your Majesty, that the most miserable of men applies himself to your clemency, as his last hope and his last refuge, that your mercy is most earnestly and humbly implored by a clergyman, whom your Laws and Judges have condemned to the horror and ignominy of a publick execution.

"I confess the crime, and own the enormity of its consequences, and the danger of its example Nor have I the confidence to petition for impunity, but humbly hope, that publick security may

* His Speech at the Old-Bailey, when found guilty

be established, without the spectacle of a clergyman dragged through the streets, to a death of infamy, amidst the derision of the profligate and profane, and that justice may be satisfied with irrevocable exile, perpetual disgrace, and hopeless penury.

"My life, Sir, has not been useless to mankind I have benefited many But my offences against God are numberless, and I have had little time for repentance Preserve me, Sir, by your prerogative of mercy, from the necessity of appearing unprepared at that tribunal before which Kings and subjects must stand at last together Permit me to hide my guilt in some obscure corner of a foreign country, where, if I can ever attain confidence to hope that my prayers will be heard, they shall be poured with all the fervour of gratitude for the life and happiness of your Majesty I am, Sir,

"Your Majesty's, &c."

Subjoined to it was written as follows

To Dr DODD

"SIR,—I most seriously enjoin you not to let it be at all known that I have written this letter, and to return the copy to Mr Allen in a cover to me I hope I need not tell you, that I wish it success — But do not indulge hope — Tell nobody "

It happened luckily that Mr Allen was pitched on to assist in this melancholy office, for he was a great friend of Mr Akeman, the keeper of Newgate Dr Johnson never went to see Dr Dodd He said to me, it would have done *him* more harm, than good to Dodd, who once expressed a desire to see him, but not earnestly.

Dr Johnson, on the 20th of June wrote the following letter.

To the Right Honourable CHARLES JENKINSON

"SIR,—Since the conviction and condemnation of Dr. Dodd, I have had, by the intervention of a friend, some intercourse with him, and I am sure I shall lose nothing in your opinion by tenderness and commiseration Whatever be the crime, it is not easy to have any knowledge of the delinquent without a wish that his life may be spared, at least when no life has been taken away by him. I will, therefore, take the liberty of suggesting some reasons for which I wish this unhappy being to escape the utmost rigour of his sentence

"He is, so far as I can recollect, the first clergyman of our church who has suffered public execution for immorality, and I know not whether it would not be more for the interest of religion to bury such an offender in the obscurity of perpetual exile, than to expose

him in a cart, and on the gallows, to all who for any reason are enemies to the clergy

"The supreme power has, in all ages, paid some attention to the voice of the people, and that voice does not least deserve to be heard, when it calls out for mercy. There is now a very general desire that Dodd's life should be spared. More is not wished, and, perhaps, this is not too much to be granted.

"If you, Sir, have any opportunity of enforcing these reasons, you may, perhaps, think them worthy of consideration. But whatever you determine, I most respectfully intreat that you will be pleased to pardon for this intrusion, Sir,

"Your most obedient

"And most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON"

It has been confidently circulated, with invidious remarks, that to this letter no attention whatever was paid by Mr. Jenkinson, now Lord Hawkesbury, and that he did not even deign to shew the common civility of owning the receipt of it. I could not but wonder at such conduct in the noble Lord, whose own character and just elevation in life, I thought, must have impressed him with all due regard for great abilities and attainments. As the story had been much talked of, and apparently from good authority, I could not but have animadverted upon it in this work, had it been as was alledged, but from my earnest love of truth, and having found reason to think that there might be a mistake, I presumed to write to his Lordship requesting an explanation; and it is with the sincerest pleasure that I am enabled to assure the world, that there is no foundation for it, the fact being, that owing to some neglect, or accident, Johnson's letter never came to Lord Hawkesbury's hands. I should have thought it strange indeed, if that noble Lord had undervalued my illustrious friend, but instead of this being the case, his Lordship, in the very polite answer with which he was pleased immediately to honour me, thus expresses himself—"I have always respected the memory of Dr. Johnson, and admire his writings, and I frequently read many parts of them with pleasure and great improvement."

All applications for the Royal Mercy having failed,¹ Dr. Dodd

Third Edition, line 17—Afterwards Earl of Liverpool

¹ There can be little doubt but that the case of the Perreaus, in which the king's grace had been withheld, stood in the way of Dodd being spared. The popular belief was that Lord Thurlow inter-

posed. Miss Thrale (*Margia*) quotes a speech of the king's. "Now," said he, "if I am ever solicited to pardon for forgery, you shall be made to remember these arguments."

prepared himself for death, and, with a warmth of gratitude, wrote to Dr Johnson as follows:

"June 25 *Monday*

"Accept thou *great* and *good* heart, my earnest and fervent thanks and prayers for all thy benevolent and kind efforts in my behalf—Oh! Dr Johnson! as I sought your knowledge at an early hour in life, would to heaven I had cultivated the love and acquaintance of so excellent a man!—I pray God most sincerely to bless you with the highest transports—the infant satisfaction of *humane* and benevolent exertions!—And admitted, as I trust I shall be, to the realms of bliss before you, I shall hail *your* arrival there with transport, and rejoice to acknowledge that you was my Comforter, my Advocate, and my *Friend*! God be ever with *you*!"

Dr Johnson lastly wrote to Dr Dodd this solemn and soothing letter.

To the Reverend Dr Dodd.

'DEAR SIR,—That which is appointed to all men is now coming upon you. Outward circumstances, the eyes and the thoughts of men, are below the notice of an immortal being about to stand the trial for eternity, before the Supreme Judge of heaven and earth. Be comforted your crime, morally or religiously considered, has no very deep dye of turpitude. It corrupted no man's principles, it attacked no man's life. It involved only a temporary and reparable injury. Of this, and of all other sins, you are earnestly to repent, and may God, who knoweth our frailty and desireth not our death, accept your repentance, for the sake of his Son JESUS CHRIST our Lord.

"In requital of those well intended offices which you are pleased so emphatically to acknowledge, let me beg that you make in your devotions one petition for my eternal welfare. I am, dear Sir,

"Your affectionate servant,

"SAM JOHNSON

'June 26 1777'

Under the copy of this letter I found written, in Johnson's own hand, "Next day, June 27, he was executed.

To conclude this interesting episode with an useful application, let us now attend to the reflections of Johnson at the end of the "Occasional Papers, concerning the unfortunate Dr Dodd.—Such were the last thoughts of a man whom we have seen

exulting in popularity, and sunk in shame For his reputation, which no man can give to himself, those who conferred it are to answer. Of his publick ministry the means of judging were sufficiently attainable He must be allowed to preach well, whose sermons strike his audience with forcible conviction Of his life, those who thought it consistent with his doctrine did not originally form false notions He was at first what he endeavoured to make others, but the world broke down his resolution, and he in time ceased to exemplify his own instructions

"Let those who are tempted to his faults, tremble at his punishment, and those whom he impressed from the pulpit with religious sentiments, endeavour to confirm them by considering the regret and self-abhorrence with which he reviewed in prison his deviations from rectitude"

Johnson gave us this evening, in his happy discriminative manner, a portrait of the late Mr Fitzherbert, of Derbyshire "There was (said he) no sparkle, no brilliancy in Fitzherbert, but I never knew a man who was so generally acceptable. He made every body quite easy, overpowered nobody by the superiority of his talents, made no man think worse of himself by being his rival, seemed always to listen, did not oblige you to hear much from him, and did not oppose what you said Every body liked him, but he had no friend, as I understand the word, nobody with whom he exchanged intimate thoughts People were willing to think well of every thing about him A gentleman was making an affected rant, as many people do, of great feelings about 'his dear son,' who was at school near London, how anxious he was lest he might be ill, and what he would give to see him 'Can't you (said Fitzherbert) take a post-chaise and go to him?" This, to be sure, *finished* the affected man, but there was not much in it. However this was circulated as wit for a whole winter, and I believe part of a summer too, a proof that he was

Cor et Ad—Line 31 On "it" put the following note—"Dr Gisborne, Physician to his Majesty's Household, has obligingly communicated to me a fuller account of this story than had reached Dr Johnson. The afflicted Gentleman was the late John Gilbert Cooper, Esq author of a Life of Socrates, and of some poems in Dodsley's collection Mr Fitzherbert found him one morning, apparently, in such violent agitation, on account of the indisposition of his son, as to seem beyond the power of comfort At length, however, he exclaimed, 'I'll write an Elegy' Mr Fitzherbert being satisfied, by this, of the sincerity of his emotions, slyly said, 'Had not you better take a post-chaise and go and see him?' It was the shrewdness of the insinuation which made the story be circulated"¹

¹ Mr Cooper, says Mr Malone, was the last of the Sentimentalists.

no very witty man He was an instance of the truth of the observation, that a man will please more upon the whole by negative qualities than by positive, by never offending, than by giving a great deal of delight In the first place, men hate more steadily than they love, and if I have said something to hurt a man once, I shall not get the better of this by saying many things to please him

Tuesday, September 16, Dr Johnson having mentioned to me the extraordinary size and price of some cattle reared by Dr. Taylor, I rode out with our host, surveyed his farm, and was shown one cow which he had sold for a hundred and twenty guineas, and another for which he had been offered a hundred and thirty. Taylor thus described to me his old schoolfellow and friend, Johnson "He is a man of a very clear head, great power of words, and a very gay imagination, but there is no disputing with him He will not hear you, and having a louder voice than you, must roar you down"

In the afternoon I tried to get Dr Johnson to like the Poems of Mr Hamilton of Bangour, which I had brought with me I had been much pleased with them at a very early age, the impression still remained on my mind it was confirmed by the opinion of my friend the Honourable Andrew Erskine, himself both a good poet and a good critic, who thought Hamilton as true a poet as ever wrote and that his not having fame was unaccountable Johnson upon repeated occasions, while I was at Ashbourne, talked slightly of Hamilton He said there was no power of thinking in his verses nothing that strikes one, nothing better than what you generally find in magazines, and that the highest praise they deserved was, that they were very well for a gentleman to hand about among his friends He said the imitation of *Ne sit ancillæ tibi amor &c* was too solemn, he read part of it at the beginning He read the beautiful pathetick song, "Ah the poor shepherd's mournful fate," and did not seem to give attention to what I had been used to think tender elegant strains, but laughed at the rhyme, in Scotch pronunciation, *wishes* and *blushes*, reading *wushes*—and there he stopped. He owned that the epitaph on Lord Newhall was pretty well done He read the "Inscription in a Summer-house," and a little of the imitations of Horace's Epistles, but said, he found nothing to make him desire to read on When I urged that there were some good poetical passages in the book "Where (said he) will you find so large a collection without some" I thought the description of Winter might obtain his approbation

" See Winter, from the frozen north,
 Drives his iron chariot forth '
 His grisly hand in icy chains
 Fair Tweeda's silver flood constrains," &c.

He asked why an "*iron chariot*," and said "*icy chains*" was an old image. I was struck with the uncertainty of taste, and somewhat sorry that a poet whom I had long read with fondness, was not approved by Dr. Johnson. I comforted myself with thinking that the beauties were too delicate for his robust perceptions. Garrick maintained that he had not a taste for the finest productions of genius; but I was sensible, that when he took the trouble to analyse critically, he generally convinced us that he was right.

In the evening, the Reverend Mr Seward, of Lichfield, who was passing through Ashbourne in his way home, drank tea with us. Johnson described him thus — "Sir, his ambition is to be a fine talker; so he goes to Buxton, and such places, where he may find companies to listen to him. And, Sir, he is a valetudinarian, one of those who are always mending themselves. I do not know a more disagreeable character than a valetudinarian, who thinks he may do any thing that is for his ease, and indulges himself in the grossest freedoms. Sir, he brings himself to the state of a hog in a sty."

Dr Taylor's nose happening to bleed, he said, it was because he had omitted to have himself blooded four days after a quarter of a year's interval. Dr Johnson, who was a great dabbler in physick, disapproved much of periodical bleeding. "For (said he) you accustom yourself to an evacuation which Nature cannot perform of herself, and therefore she cannot help you, should you, from forgetfulness or any other cause, omit it, so you may be suddenly suffocated. You may accustom yourself to other periodical evacuations, because should you omit them, Nature can supply the omission, but Nature cannot open a vein to blood you."—"I do not like to take an emetic, (said Taylor,) for fear of breaking some small vessels."—"Poh!" (said Johnson) if you have so many things that will break, you had better break your neck at once, and there's an end on't. You will break no small vessels." (blowing with high derision).

I mentioned to Dr. Johnson, that David Hume's persisting in his infidelity, when he was dying, shocked me much. JOHNSON "Why should it shock you, Sir?" Hume owned he had never read the New Testament with attention. Here then was a man who had been at

no pains to inquire into the truth of religion, and had continually turned his mind the other way. It was not to be expected that the prospect of death would alter his way of thinking, unless God should send an angel to set him right." I said, I had reason to believe that the thought of annihilation gave Hume no pain. JOHNSON "It was not so, Sir. He had a vanity in being thought easy. It is more probable that he should assume an appearance of ease, than that so very improbable a thing should be, as a man not afraid of going (as, in spite of his delusive theory, he cannot be sure but he may go,) into an unknown state, and not being uneasy at leaving all he knew. And you are to consider, that upon his own principle of annihilation he had no motive to speak the truth." The horror of death which I had always observed in Dr Johnson, appeared strong to night. I ventured to tell him, that I had been, for moments of my life, not afraid of death, therefore I could suppose another man in that state of mind for a considerable space of time. He said, "he never had a moment in which death was not terrible to him." He added, that it had been observed, that almost no man dies in publick, but with apparent resolution, from that desire of praise which never quits us. I said, Dr. Dodd seemed to be willing to die and full of hopes of happiness. "Sir, (said he,) Dr Dodd would have given both his hands and both his legs to have lived. The better a man is, the more afraid is he of death, having a clearer view of infinite purity." He owned, that our being in an unhappy uncertainty as to our salvation, was mysterious, and said, "Ah! we must wait till we are in another state of being, to have many things explained to us." Even the powerful mind of Johnson seemed foiled by futurity. But I thought, that the gloom of uncertainty in solemn religious speculation being mingled with hope, was yet more consolatory than the emptiness of infidelity. A man can live in thick air, but perishes in an exhausted receiver.

Dr Johnson was much pleased with a remark which I told him was made to me by General Paoli—"That it is impossible not to be afraid of death, and that those who at the time of dying are not afraid, are not thinking of death, but of applause, or something else, which keeps death out of their sight so that all men are equally afraid of death when they see it, only some have a power of turning their sight away from it better than others."

On Wednesday, September 17, Dr Butter, physician at Derby, drank tea with us, and it was settled that Dr. Johnson and I should

¹ Storer, who was at the execution, said that he seemed "stupid from despair." The whole scene is full of a ghastly interest.

go on Friday and dine with him Johnson said, "I'm glad of this." He seemed weary of the uniformity of life at Dr Taylor's

Talking of biography, I said, in writing a life a man's peculiarities should be mentioned, because they mark his character JOHNSON. "Sir, there is no doubt as to peculiarities the question is, whether a man's vices should be mentioned, for instance, whether it should be mentioned that Addison and Parnel drank too freely, for people will probably more easily indulge in drinking from knowing this, so that more ill may be done by the example, than good by telling the whole truth" Here was an instance of his varying from himself in talk, for when Lord Hailes and he sat one morning calmly conversing in my house at Edinburgh, I well remember that Dr. Johnson maintained, that "if a man is to write *A Panegyrick*, he may keep vices out of sight, but if he professes to write *A Life*, he must represent it really as it was" and when I objected to the danger of telling that Parnel drank to excess, he said, that "it would produce an instructive caution to avoid drinking, when it was seen, that even the learning and genius of Parnel could be debased by it." And in the Hebrides he maintained, as appears from my "Journal,"^a that a man's intimate friend should mention his faults, if he writes his life

He had this evening, partly, I suppose, from the spirit of contradiction to his Whig friend, a violent argument with Dr Taylor, as to the inclinations of the people of England at this time towards the Royal Family of Stuart He grew so outrageous as to say, "that if England were fairly polled, the present King would be sent away to-night, and his adherents hanged to-morrow" Taylor, who was as violent a Whig as Johnson was a Tory, was roused by this to a pitch of bellowing He denied, loudly, what Johnson said, and maintained, that there was an abhorrence against the Stuart family, though he admitted that the people were not much attached to the present King^b JOHNSON "Sir, the state of the country is this the people knowing it to be agreed on all hands that this King has not the hereditary right to the crown, and there being no hope that he who has it can be restored, have grown cold and indifferent upon the subject of loyalty, and have no warm attachment to any King They would not, therefore, risk any thing to restore the exiled family. They would not give twenty shillings a piece to

^a Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, 3d edit p 240

^b Dr Taylor was very ready to make this admission, because the party with which he was connected was not in power There was then some truth in it, owing to the pertinacity of factious clamour Had he lived till now, it would have been impossible for him to deny that his Majesty possesses the warmest affection of his people

bring it about. But, if a mere vote could do it, there would be twenty to one, at least, there would be a very great majority of voices for it. For, Sir, you are to consider, that all those who think a King has a right to his crown, as a man has to his estate, which is the just opinion, would be for restoring the King who certainly has the hereditary right, could he be trusted with it, in which there would be no danger now, when laws and every thing else are so much advanced, and every King will govern by the laws. And you must also consider, Sir, that there is nothing on the other side to oppose to this, for it is not alledged by any one that the present family has any inherent right, so that the Whigs could not have a contest between two rights."

Dr Taylor admitted, that if the question as to hereditary right were to be tried by a poll of the people of England, to be sure the abstract doctrine would be given in favour of the family of Stuart, but he said, the conduct of that family, which occasioned their expulsion, was so fresh in the minds of the people, that they would not vote for a restoration. Dr Johnson, I think, was contented with the admission as to the hereditary right, leaving the original point in dispute, *viz* what the people upon the whole would do, taking in right and affection; for he said, people were afraid of a change, even when they thought it right. Dr Taylor said something of the slight foundation of the hereditary right of the house of Stuart. "Sir, (said Johnson,) the house of Stuart succeeded to the full right of both the houses of York and Lancaster, whose common source had the undisputed right. A right to a throne is like a right to any thing else. Possession is sufficient, where no better right can be shewn. This was the case with the Royal Family of England, as it is now with the King of France: for as to the first beginning of the right, we are in the dark."

Thursday, September 18. Last night Dr Johnson had proposed that the crystal lustre, or chandelier, in Dr Taylor's large room should be lighted up some time or other. Taylor said, it should be lighted up next night. "That will do very well, (said I,) for it is Dr Johnson's birth-day." When we were in the Isle of Sky, Johnson had desired me not to mention his birth-day. He did not seem pleased at this time that I mentioned it, and said (somewhat sternly) "he would *not* have the lustre lighted the next night."

Some ladies who had been present yesterday when I mentioned his birth-day, came to dinner to-day, and plagued him unintentionally, by wishing him joy. I know not why he disliked having his birth-day mentioned, unless it were that it reminded him of his approaching nearer to death, of which he had a constant dread.

I mentioned to him a friend of mine who was formerly gloomy from low spirits, and much distressed by the fear of death, but was now uniformly placid, and contemplated his dissolution without any perturbation. "Sir, (said Johnson,) this is only a disordered imagination taking a different turn."

We talked of a collection being made of all the English Poets who had published a volume of poems Johnson told me, "that a Mr. Coxeter, whom he knew, had gone the greatest length towards this; having collected, I think, about five hundred volumes of poets whose works were little known, but that upon his death Tom Osborne bought them, and they were dispersed, which he thought a pity, as it was curious to see any series complete, and in every volume of poems something good may be found"

He observed, that a gentleman of eminence in literature had got into a bad style of poetry of late "He puts (said he) a very common thing in a strange dress till he does not know it himself, and thinks other people do not know it" BOSWELL "That is owing to his being so much versant in old English Poetry" JOHNSON "What is that to the purpose, Sir? If I say a man is drunk, and you tell me it is owing to his taking much drink, the matter is not mended. No, Sir, ——— has taken to an odd mode¹ For example, he'd write thus:

' Hermit hoar, in solemn cell,
Wearing out life's evening gray "

Gray evening is common enough, but *evening gray* he'd think fine —Stay, —we'll make out the stanza "

' Hermit hoar, in solemn cell,
Wearing out life's evening gray,
Smite thy bosom, sage, and tell,
What is bliss? and which the way?'"

BOSWELL. "But why smite his bosom, Sir?" JOHNSON "Why to shew he was in earnest," (smiling).—He at an after period added the following stanza

" Thus I spoke, and speaking sigh'd,
—Scaice repress'd the starting tear,—
When the smiling sage reply'd—
—Come, my lad, and drink some beer '"

^a As some of my readers may be gratified by reading the precise progress of this

¹ Mr Croker shows that Warton, whose poems had recently been published, was intended here One of the odes com-

mences with the line—

" Evening spreads his mantle hoar," which was perhaps, in Johnson's mind.

I cannot help thinking the first stanza very good solemn poetry, as also the three first lines of the second. Its last line is an excellent burlesque surprize on gloomy sentimental enquirers. And, perhaps, the advice is as good as can be given to a low-spirited dissatisfied being—"Don't trouble your head with sickly thinking. take a cup, and be merry."

Fr day, September 19, after breakfast, Dr Johnson and I set out in Dr Taylors chaise to go to Derby. The day was fine, and we resolved to go by Keddlestone, the seat of Lord Scarsdale, that I might see his Lordship's fine house. I was struck with the magnificence of the building, and the extensive park, with the finest verdure, covered with deer, and cattle, and sheep, delighted me. The number of old oaks, of an immense size, filled me with a sort of respectful admiration for one of them sixty pounds was offered. The excellent smooth gravel roads, the large piece of water formed by his Lordship from some small brooks, with a handsome barge upon it, the venerable Gothick church, now the family chapel, just by the house, in short, the grand groupe of objects agitated and distended my mind in a most agreeable manner. "One should think (said I) that the proprietor of all this *must* be happy."—"Nay, Sir, (said Johnson,) all this excludes out one evil—poverty."

Our names were sent up, and a well drest elderly housekeeper, a most distinct articulator, shewed us the house, which I need not describe, as it is published in "Adam's Works in Architecture." Dr Johnson thought better of it to-day than when he saw it before; for the other night he attacked it violently, saying, "It would do

little composition, I shall insert it from my notes. "When Dr Johnson and I were sitting *à la table* at the Mitre Tavern May 9, 1778, he said, 'Where is bliss' would be better. He then added a ludicrous stanza but would not repeat it, lest I should take it down. It is somewhat as follows, the last line I am sure I remember

"While I thus

cried,

best,

The hoary

reply'd,

Come, my lad, and drink some beer."

"In spring 1779, when in better humour he made the second stanza, as in the text. There was only one variation afterwards made on my suggestion which was changing *hoary* in the third line to *smiling*, both to avoid a sameness with the epithet in the first line and to describe the hermit in his pleasantry. He was then very well pleased that I should preserve it."

"When I mentioned Dr Johnson's remark to a lady of admirable good sense and quickness of understanding, she observed, "It is true, all this excludes only one evil, but how much good does it let in?"

Cor et Ad—To the note add—"To this observation much praise has been justly given. Let me then now do myself the honour to mention that the lady who made it was the late Margaret Montgomerie, my very valuable wife, and the very affectionate mother of my children, who, if they inherit her good qualities, will have no reason to complain of their lot. *Dos magna parentum virtus*."

excellently for a town hall The large room with the pillars (said he) would do for the judges to sit in at the assizes, the circular room for a jury chamber, and the rooms above for prisoners." Still he thought the large room ill lighted, and of no use but for dancing in, and the bed-chambers but indifferent rooms, and that the immense sum which it cost was injudiciously laid out. Dr. Taylor had put him in mind of his *appearing* pleased with the house "But (said he) that was when Lord Scarsdale was present. Politeness obliges us to appear pleased with a man's works when he is present No man will be so ill bred as to question you. You may therefore pay compliments without saying what is not true I should say to Lord Scarsdale of his large room, 'My Lord, this is the most *costly* room that I ever saw,' which is true"

Dr Manningham, physician in London, who was visiting at Lord Scarsdale's, accompanied us through many of the rooms, and soon afterwards my Lord himself, to whom Dr. Johnson was known, appeared, and did the honours of the house. We talked of Mr. Langton Johnson, with a warm vehemence of affectionate regard, exclaimed, "The earth does not bear a worthier man than Bennet Langton" We saw a good many fine pictures, which I think are described in one of "Young's Tours" There is a printed catalogue of them which the housekeeper put into my hand, I should like to view them at leisure I was much struck with Daniel interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream by Rembrandt. We were shown a pretty large library. In his Lordship's dressing-room lay Johnson's small Dictionary: he shewed it to me, with some eagerness, saying, "Look'ye! *Quæ terra nostri non plena laboris.*" He observed, also, Goldsmith's "Animated Nature," and said, "Here's our friend! The poor Doctor would have been happy to hear of this."

In our way, Johnson strongly expressed his love of driving fast in a post-chaise "If (said he) I had no duties, and no reference to futurity, I would spend my life in driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman; but she should be one who could understand me, and would add something to the conversation" I observed, that we were this day to stop just where the Highland army did in 1745. JOHNSON "It was a noble attempt" BOSWELL "I wish we could have an authentick history of it" JOHNSON "If you were not an idle dog you might write it, by collecting from every body what they can tell, and putting down your authorities" BOSWELL "But I could not have the advantage of it in my lifetime." JOHNSON "You might have the satisfaction of its fame, by printing it in Holland; and as to profit, consider how long it was before writing came to be considered in a pecuniary view Baretto

says, he is the first man that ever received copy-money in Italy." I said, that I would endeavour to do what Dr. Johnson suggested, and I thought that I might write so as to venture to publish my "History of the Civil War in Great-Britain in 1745 and 1746," without being obliged to go to a foreign press.*

When we arrived at Derby, Dr. Butter accompanied us to see the manufactory of china there. I admired the ingenuity and delicate art with which a man fashioned clay into a cup, a saucer, or a teapot, while a boy turned round a wheel to give the mass rotundity. I thought this as excellent in its species of power, as making good verses in its species. Yet I had no respect for this potter. Neither, indeed, has a man of any extent of thinking for a mere verse-maker, in whose numbers, however perfect, there is no poetry, no mind. The china was beautiful, but Dr. Johnson justly observed, it was too dear, for that he could have vessels of silver, of the same size, as cheap as what were here made of porcelain.

I felt a pleasure in walking about Derby, such as I always have in walking about any town to which I am not accustomed. There is an immediate sensation of novelty, and one speculates on the way in which life is passed in it, which, although there is a sameness every where upon the whole, is yet minutely diversified. The minute diversities in every thing are wonderful. Talking of shaving the other night at Dr. Taylor's, Dr. Johnson said, "Sir, of a thousand shavers, two do not shave so much alike as not to be distinguished." I thought this not possible, till he specified so many of the varieties in shaving,—holding the razor more or less perpendicular,—drawing long or short strokes,—beginning at the upper part of the face, or the under,—at the right side or the left side. Indeed, when one considers what variety of sounds can be uttered by the wind-pipe, in the compass of a very small aperture, we may be convinced how many degrees of difference there may be in the application of a razor.

We dined with Dr. Butter, whose lady is daughter of my cousin Sir John Douglas, whose grandson is now presumptive heir of the noble family of Queensberry. Johnson and he had a good deal of medical conversation. Johnson said, he had somewhere or other given an account of Dr. Nichols's discourse "*De Animæ Medicâ*." He told us, "that whatever a man's distemper was, Dr. Nichols would not attend him as a physician, if his mind was not at ease,

* I am now happy to understand, that Mr. John Home, who was himself gallantly in the field for the reigning family, in that interesting warfare, but is generous enough to do justice to the other side, is preparing an account of it for the press.

for he believed that no medicines would have any influence. He once attended a man in trade, upon whom he found none of the medicines he prescribed had any effect, he asked the man's wife privately whether his affairs were not in a bad way? She said no. He continued his attendance some time, still without success. At length the man's wife told him, she had discovered that her husband's affairs *were* in a bad way. When Goldsmith was dying, Dr Turton said to him, 'Your pulse is in greater disorder than it should be, from the degree of fever which you have. Is your mind at ease?' Goldsmith answered it was not."

After dinner, Mrs. Butler went with me to see the silk-mill which Sir Thomas Lambe had a patent for, having brought away the contrivance from Italy. I am not very conversant with mechanicks, but the simplicity of this machine, and its multiplied operations, struck me with an agreeable surprize. I had learnt from Dr. Johnson, during this interview, not to think with a dejected indifference of the works of art, and the pleasures of life, because life is uncertain and short, but to consider such indifference as a failure of reason, a morbidness of mind, for happiness should be cultivated as much as we can, and the objects which are instrumental to it should be steadily considered as of importance, with a reference not only to ourselves, but to multitudes in successive ages. Though it is proper to value small parts, as

"Sands make the mountain, moments make the year,"^a

yet we must contemplate, collectively, to have a just estimation of objects. One moment's being uneasy or not, seems of no consequence, yet this may be thought of the next, and the next, and so on, till there is a large portion of misery. In the same way one must think of happiness, of learning, of friendship. We cannot tell the precise moment when friendship is formed. As in filling a vessel drop by drop there is at last a drop which makes it run over, so in a series of kindnesses there is at last one which makes the heart run over. We must not divide objects of our attention into minute parts, and think separately of each part. It is by contemplating a large mass of human existence, that a man, while he sets a just value on his own life, does not think of his death as annihi-

^a Young

Cor. et Ad—Line 12. For "Sir Thomas Lambe" read "Mr John Lombe," and on "Lombe" put the following note—"See Hutton's History of Derby, a book which is deservedly esteemed for its information, accuracy, and good narrative. Indeed the age in which we live is eminently distinguished by topographical excellence."

¹ The story of Lombe's escape from Italy belongs to the romance of invention.

lating all that is great and pleasing in the world, as if actually *contained in his mind*, according to Berkeley's reverie. If his imagination be not sickly and feeble, it "wings its distant way" far beyond himself, and views the world in unceasing activity of every sort. It must be acknowledged, however, that Pope's plaintive reflection, that all things would be as gay as ever on the day of his death, is natural and common. We are apt to transfer to all around us our own gloom, without considering that at any given point of time there is perhaps, as much youth and gaiety in the world as at another. Before I came into this life, in which I have had so many pleasant scenes, have not thousands and ten thousands of deaths and funerals happened, and have not families been in grief for their nearest relations? But have those dismal circumstances at all affected me? Why then should the gloomy scenes which I experience, or which I know, affect others? Let us guard against imagining that there is an end of felicity upon earth, when we ourselves grow old, or are unhappy.

Dr Johnson told us at tea, that when some of Dr Dodd's pious friends were trying to console him by saying that he was going to leave "a wretched world, he had honesty enough not to join in the cant,"—"No, no (said he) it has been a very agreeable world to me." Johnson added, "I respect Dodd for thus speaking the truth, for, to be sure he had for several years enjoyed a life of great voluptuousness."

He told us, that Dodd's city friends stood by him so, that a thousand pounds were ready to be given to the gaoler, if he would let him escape. He added, that he knew a friend of Dodd's, who walked about Newgate for some time on the evening before the day of his execution with five hundred pounds in his pocket, ready to be paid to any of the turnkeys who could get him out: but it was too late, for he was watched with much circumspection. He said, Dodd's friends had an image of him made of wax, which was to have been left in his place, and he believed it was carried into the prison.¹

Johnson disapproved of Dr Dodd's leaving the world persuaded that 'The Convict's Address to his unhappy Brethren,' was of his own writing. "But, Sir, (said I,) you contributed to the deception; for when Mr. Seward expressed a doubt to you that it was not

¹ The executioner, it was said, had been bribed not to pull the rope, so that it should not press too tightly upon the spine, and the unhappy criminal had been charged to struggle as little as

he could. A warm bath had been prepared, and Hunter, the great surgeon, was in attendance to try and resuscitate him. But all was found useless.

Dodd's own, because it had a great deal more force of mind in it than any thing known to be his, you answered,—‘Why should you think so? Depend upon it, Sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfull,’” JOHNSON. “Sir, as Dodd got it from me to pass as his own, while that could do him any good, there was an *implied promise* that I should not own it. To own it, therefore, would have been telling a lie, with the addition of breach of promise, which was worse than simply telling a lie to make it be believed it was Dodd's. Besides, Sir, I did not *directly* tell a lie. I left the matter uncertain. Perhaps I thought that Seward would not believe it the less to be mine for what I said, but I would not put it in his power to say I had owned it.”

He praised Blair's sermons. “Yet,” said he, (willing to let us see he was aware that fashionable fame, however deserved, is not always the most lasting,) “perhaps, they may not be re-printed after seven years, at least not after Blair's death.”

He said, “Goldsmith was a plant that flowered late. There appeared nothing remarkable about him when he was young; though when he had got high in fame, one of his friends¹ began to recollect something of his being distinguished at College. Goldsmith in the same manner recollected more of that friend's early years as he grew a greater man.”

I mentioned that Lord Monboddo told me, he awaked every morning at four, and then for his health got up and walked in his room naked, with the window open, which he called taking an *air bath*, after which he went to bed again, and slept two hours more. Johnson, who was always ready to beat down any thing that seemed to be exhibited with disproportionate importance, thus observed: “I suppose, Sir, there is no more in it than this, he awakes at four, and cannot sleep till he chills himself, and makes the warmth of the bed a grateful sensation.”

I talked of the difficulty of rising in the morning. Dr Johnson told me, “that the learned Mrs Carter, at that period when she was eager in study, did not awake as early as she wished, and she therefore had a contrivance, that, at a certain hour, her chamber-light should burn a string to which a heavy weight was suspended, which then fell with a strong sudden noise. This roused her from sleep, and then she had no difficulty in getting up.” But I said that was my difficulty, and wished there could be some medicine invented

¹ Burke, on meeting him at Reynolds's. The statues, two of Mr Foley's most

graceful works, stand together in front of Trinity College.

which would make one rise without pain, which I never did, unless after lying in bed a very long time. Perhaps there may be something in the stores of Nature which can do this. I have thought of a pulley to raise me gradually, but that would give me pain, as it would counteract my internal inclination. I would have something that can dissipate the *vis inertiae*, and give elasticity to the muscles. As I imagine that the human body may be put, by the operation of other substances, into any state in which it has ever been, and as I have experienced a state in which rising from bed was not disagreeable but easy, nay, sometimes agreeable, I suppose that this state may be produced, if we knew by what. We can heat the body, we can cool it, we can give it tension or relaxation; and surely it is possible to bring it into a state in which rising from bed will not be a pain.

Johnson observed, "that a man should take a sufficient quantity of sleep, which Dr Mead says is between seven and nine hours." I told him, that Dr Cullen said to me, that a man should not take more sleep than he can take at once. JOHNSON "This rule, Sir, cannot hold in all cases, for many people have their sleep broken by sickness, and surely Cullen would not have a man to get up, after having slept but an hour. Such a regimen would soon end in a *long sleep*." Dr Taylor remarked, I think very justly, "that a man who does not feel an inclination to sleep at the ordinary time, instead of being stronger than other people, must not be well, for a man in health has all the natural inclinations to eat, drink, and sleep, in a strong degree."

Johnson advised me to night not to *refine* in the education of my children. "Life (said he) will not bear refinement: you must do as other people do."

As we drove back to Ashbourne, Dr Johnson recommended to me, as he had often done, to drink water only. "For (said he) you are then sure not to get drunk, whereas if you drink wine you are never sure." I said, drinking wine was a pleasure which I was unwilling to give up. "Why, Sir, (said he,) there is no doubt that

* This regimen was, however, practised by Bishop Ken of whom Hawkins (not Sir John) in his Life of that venerable Prelate, page 4, tells us, "And that neither his study might be the aggressor on his hours of instruction, or what he judged his duty prevent his improvements: or both, his closet addresses to his God, he strictly accustomed himself to but one sleep, which often obliged him to rise at one or two of the clock in the morning and sometimes sooner, and grew so habitual, that it continued with him almost till his last illness. And so lively and cheerful was his temper, that he would be very facetious and entertaining to his friends in the evening, even when it was perceived that with difficulty he kept his eyes open, and then seemed to go to rest with no other purpose than the refreshing and enabling him with more vigour and cheerfulness to sing his morning hymn, as he then used to do to his lute, before he put on his cloaths."

not to drink wine is a great deduction from life, but it may be necessary." He however owned, that in his opinion, a free use of wine did not shorten life, and said, he would not give less for the life of a certain Scotch Lord (whom he named) celebrated for hard drinking, than for that of a sober man "But stay, (said he, with his usual intelligence, and accuracy of enquiry,) does it take much wine to make him drunk?" I answered, "A great deal either of wine or strong punch"—"Then (said he) that is the worse" I presume to illustrate my friend's observation thus "A fortress which soon surrenders has its walls less shattered, than when a long and obstinate resistance is made"

I ventured to mention a person who was as violent a Scotchman as he was an Englishman, and literally had the same contempt for an Englishman compared with a Scotchman, that he had for a Scotchman compared with an Englishman, and that he would say of Dr Johnson, "Damned rascal" to talk as he does of the Scotch "This seemed, for a moment, "to give him pause" It, perhaps, presented his extreme prejudice against the Scotch in a point of view somewhat new to him, by the effect of *contrast*

By the time when we returned to Ashbourne, Dr Taylor was gone to bed Johnson and I sat up a long time by ourselves

He was much diverted with an article which I shewed him in the "Critical Review" of this year, giving an account of a curious publication, entitled, "A Spiritual Diary and Soliloquies, by John Rutty, M D" Dr Rutty was one of the people called Quakers, a physician of some eminence in Dublin, and authour of several works This Diary, which was kept from 1753 to 1775, the year in which he died, and was now published in two volumes, octavo, exhibited, in the simplicity of his heart, a minute and honest register of the state of his mind, which, though frequently laughable enough, was not more so than the history of many men would be, if recorded with equal fairness

The following specimens were extracted by the Reviewers:

"Tenth month, 1753

"23 Indulgence in bed an hour too long

"Twelfth month, 17 An hypochondriack obnubilation from wind and indigestion

"Ninth month, 28. An over-dose of whisky.

"29 A dull, cross, cholerick day

"First month, 1757—22 A little swinish at dinner and repast.

"31 Dogged on provocation

"Second month, 5 Very dogged or snappish

"14. Snappish on fasting.

"26. Cursed snappishness to those under me, on a bodily indisposition

"Third month, 11 On a provocation, exercised a dumb resentment for two days, instead of scolding.

"22 Scolded too vehemently

"23. Dogged again

"Fourth month, 29. Mechanically and sinfully dogged."

Johnson laughed heartily at this good Quietist's self-condemning minutes, particularly at his mentioning, with such a serious regret, occasional instances of "*swinishness* in eating, and *doggedness of temper*" He thought the observations of the Critical Reviewers upon the importance of a man to himself so ingenious and so well expressed, that I shall here introduce them

After observing, that "There are few writers who have gained any reputation by recording their own actions," they say,

"We may reduce the egotists to four classes In the *first* we have Julius Cæsar he relates his own transactions, but he relates them with peculiar grace and dignity, and his narrative is supported by the greatness of his character and achievements In the *second* class we have Marcus Antoninus this writer has given us a series of reflections on his own life, but his sentiments are so noble, his morality so sublime, that his meditations are universally admired. In the *third* class we have some others of tolerable credit, who have given importance to their own private history by an intermixture of literary anecdotes, and the occurrences of their own times the celebrated *Huetius* has published an entertaining volume upon this plan, '*De rebus ad eum pertinentibus*.' In the *fourth* class we have the journalists, temporal and spiritual Elias Ashmole, William Lilly, George Whitefield, John Wesley, and a thousand other old women and fanatick writers of memoirs and meditations "

I mentioned to him that Dr Hugh Blair, in his lectures on Rhetorick and Belles Lettres, which I heard him deliver at Edinburgh had animadverted on the Johnsonian style as too pompous, and attempted to imitate it, by giving a sentence of Addison in "The Spectator," No 411, in the manner of Johnson. When treating of the utility of the pleasures of imagination in preserving us from vice, it is observed of those "who know not how to be idle and innocent," that their very first step out of business is into vice or folly, which Dr Blair supposed would have been expressed in "The Rambler," thus: "Their very first step out of the regions of

business is into the perturbation of vice, or the vacuity of folly " *
 JOHNSON " Sir, these are not the words I should have used No, Sir, the imitators of my style have not hit it Miss Aikin has done it the best; for she has imitated the sentiment as well as the diction "

I intend, before this work is concluded, to exhibit specimens of imitation of my friend's style in various modes, some caricaturing or mimicking it, and some formed upon it, whether intentionally or with a degree of similarity to it, of which, perhaps, the writers were not conscious

In Baretti's Review, which he published in Italy, under the title of "*Frusta Letteraria*," it is observed, that Dr Robertson the historian had formed his style upon that of "*Il celebre Samuele Johnson*" My friend himself was of that opinion, for he once said to me, in a pleasant humour, " Sir, if Robertson's style be faulty, he owes it to me, that is, having too many words, and those too big ones "

I read to him a letter which Lord Monboddo had written to me, containing some critical remarks upon the style of his "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland" His Lordship praised the very fine passage upon landing at Icolmkill,^b but his own style being exceedingly dry and hard, he disapproved of the richness of Johnson's language, and of his frequent use of metaphorical expressions JOHNSON " Why, Sir, this criticism would be just, if in my style, superfluous words, or words too big for the thoughts, could be pointed out, but this I do not believe can be done. For instance in the passage which Lord Monboddo admires,

* When Dr Blair published his "Lectures," he was invidiously attacked for having omitted his censure on Johnson's style, and, on the contrary, praising it highly But before that time Johnson's "Lines of the Poets" had appeared, in which his style was considerably easier than when he wrote "The Rambler" It would, therefore, have been uncandid in Blair, even supposing his criticism to have been just, to have preserved it

^b "We were now treading that illustrious island, which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge, and the blessings of religion To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible, if it were endeavour'd and would be foolish if it were possible Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings Far from me, and from my friends, be such frigid philosophy, as may conduct us, indifferent and unmoved, over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona

Had our Tour produced nothing else but this sublime passage, the world must have acknowledged that it was not made in vain The present respectable President of the Royal Society was so much struck on reading it, that he clasped his hands together, and remained for some time in an attitude of silent admiration

'We were now treading that illustrious region,' the word *illustrious*, contributes nothing to the mere narration, for the fact might be told without it. but it is not, therefore, superfluous; for it wakes the mind to peculiar attention, where something of more than usual importance is to be presented 'Illustrious!'—for what? and then the sentence proceeds to expand the circumstances connected with Iona. And, Sir, as to metaphorical expression, that is a great excellence in style, when it is used with propriety, for it gives you two ideas for one;—conveys the meaning more luminously, and generally with a perception of delight."

He told me, that he had been asked to undertake the new edition of the *Biographia Britannica*, but had declined it, which he afterwards said to me he regretted. In this regret many will join, because it would have procured us more of Johnson's most delightful species of writing and although my friend Dr Kippis has hitherto discharged the task judiciously, distinctly, and with more impartiality than might have been expected from a Separatist, it were to have been wished that the superintendence of this literary Temple of Fame, had been assigned to "a friend to the constitution in Church and State." We should not then have had it too much crowded with obscure dissenting teachers, doubtless men of merit and worth, but not quite to be numbered amongst "the most eminent persons who have flourished in Great-Britain and Ireland."

Cor et Ad—Line 25 On "Ireland" put the following note,—“In this censure which has been carelessly uttered, I carelessly joined. But in justice to Dr Kippis, who with that manly candid good temper which marks his character, set me right, I now with pleasure retract it, and I desire it may be particularly observed, as pointed out by him to me, that, 'The new lives of dissenting Divines, in the first four volumes of the second edition of the "*Biographia Britannica*," are those of John Abernethy, Thomas Amory, George Benson, Hugh Broughton the learned Puritan, Simon Browne, Joseph Boyse of Dublin, Thomas Cartwright the learned Puritan, and Samuel Chandler. The only doubt I have ever heard suggested is, whether there should have been an article of Dr Amory. But I was convinced, and am still convinced, that he was entitled to one, from the reality of his learning, and the excellent and candid nature of his practical writings.

"The new lives of clergymen of the church of England, in the same four volumes, are as follows: John Balguy, Edward Bentham, George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne, William Berriman, Thomas Birch, William Borlase, Thomas Bott, James Bradley, Thomas Broughton, John Brown, John Burton, Joseph Butler Bishop of Durham, Thomas Carte, Edmund Castell, Edmund Chishull, Charles Churchill, William Clarke, Robert Clayton Bishop of Clogher, John Conybeare Bishop of Bristol, George Costard, and Samuel Coxall—I am not conscious (says Dr Kippis) of any partiality in conducting the work. I would not willingly insert a Dissenting Minister that does not justly deserve to be noticed, or omit an established clergyman that does. At the same time, I shall not be deterred from introducing Dissenters into the *Biographia*, when I am satisfied that they are entitled to that distinction, from their writings, learning, and merit."

'Let me add that the expression 'A friend to the Constitution in Church and

On Saturday, September 20, after breakfast, when Taylor was gone out to his farm, Dr Johnson and I had a serious conversation by ourselves on melancholy and madness, which he was, I always thought, erroneously inclined to confound together. Melancholy, like "great wit," may be "near allied to madness;" but there is, in my opinion, a distinct separation between them. When he talked of madness, he was to be understood as speaking of those who were in any great degree disturbed, or as it is commonly expressed, "troubled in mind." Some of the ancient philosophers held, that all deviations from right reason were madness, and whoever wishes to see the opinions both of ancients and moderns upon this subject, collected and illustrated with a variety of curious facts, may read Dr Arnold's very entertaining work^a.

Johnson said, "A madman loves to be with people whom he fears, not as a dog fears the lash, but of whom he stands in awe." I was struck with the justice of this observation. To be with those of whom a person, whose mind is wavering and dejected, stands in awe, represses and composes an uneasy tumult of spirits, and consoles him with the contemplation of something steady, and at least comparatively great.

He added, "Madmen are all sensual in the lower stages of the distemper. They are eager for gratifications to soothe their minds and divert their attention from the misery which they suffer. but when they grow very ill, pleasure is too weak for them, and they seek for pain^b. Employment, Sir, and hardships, prevent melancholy. I suppose in all our army in America there was not one man who went mad."

We entered seriously upon a question of much importance to me, which Johnson was pleased to consider with friendly attention. I had long complained to him that I felt myself discontented in

State,' was not meant by me, as any reflection upon this Reverend Gentleman, as if he were an enemy to the political constitution of his country, is established at the revolution, but, from my sturdy and avowed predilection for a *Tory*, was quoted from 'Johnson's Dictionary' where that distinction is so defined."

^a 'Observations on Insanity,' by Thomas Arnold, M D London 1782

^b We read in the Gospels, that those unfortunate persons, who were possessed with evil spirits, (which, after all, I think is the most probable cause of madness, as was first suggested to me by my respectable friend Sir John Pringle,) had recourse to pain, tearing themselves, and jumping sometimes into the fire, sometimes into the water. Mr Seward has furnished me with a remarkable anecdote in confirmation of Dr Johnson's observation. A tradesman, who had acquired a large fortune in London, retired from business, and went to live at Worcester. His mind, being without its usual occupation, and having nothing else to supply its place, preyed upon itself, so that existence was a torment to him. At last he was seized with the stone, and a friend who found him in one of its severest fits, having expressed his concern, "No, no, Sir (said he,) don't pity me: what I now feel is ease, compared with that torture of mind from which it relieves me."

Scotland, as too narrow a sphere, and that I wished to make my chief residence in London, the great scene of ambition, instruction, and amusement, a scene, which was to me, comparatively speaking, a heaven upon earth. JOHNSON "Why, Sir, I never knew any one who had such a *gust* for London as you have, and I cannot blame you for your wish to live there. yet, Sir, were I in your father's place, I should not consent to your settling there; for I have the old feudal notions, and I should be afraid that Auchinleck would be deserted, as you would soon find it more desirable to have a country seat in a better climate. I own, however, that to consider it as a *duty* to reside on a family estate is a prejudice, for we must consider, that working people get employment equally, and the produce of land is sold equally, whether a great family resides at home or not, and if the rents of an estate be carried to London, they return again in the circulation of commerce, nay, Sir, we must perhaps allow, that carrying the rents to a distance is a good, because it contributes to that circulation. We must, however, allow, that a well regulated great family may improve a neighbourhood in civility and elegance, and give an example of good order, virtue, and piety, and so its residence at home may be of much advantage. But if a great family be disorderly and vicious, its residence at home is very pernicious to a neighbourhood. There is not now the same inducement to live in the country as formerly, the pleasures of social life are much better enjoyed in town, and there is no longer in the country that power and influence in proprietors of land which they had in old times, and which made the country so agreeable to them. The Laird of Auchinleck now is not near so great a man as the Laird of Auchinleck was a hundred years ago."

I told him, that one of my ancestors never went from home without being attended by thirty men on horseback. Johnson's shrewdness and spirit of enquiry were exerted upon every occasion. "Pray (said he) how did your ancestor support his thirty men and thirty horses, when he went at a distance from home, in an age when there was hardly any money in circulation?" I suggested the same difficulty to a friend, who mentioned Douglas's going to the Holy Land with a numerous train of followers. "Douglas could, no doubt, maintain followers enough while living upon his own lands, the produce of which supplied them with food, but he could not carry that food to the Holy Land; and as there was no commerce by which he could be supplied with money, how could he maintain them in foreign countries?"

I suggested a doubt, that if I were to reside in London, the exquisite zest with which I relished it in occasional visits might grow off, and I might grow tired of it. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you find no man, at all intellectual, who is willing to leave London. No, Sir, when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life. for there is in London all that life can afford."

To obviate his apprehension, that by settling in London I might desert the seat of my ancestors, I assured him, that I had old feudal principles to a degree of enthusiasm, and that I felt all the *dulcedo* of the *natale solum*. I reminded him, that the Laird of Auchinleck had an elegant house in front of which he could ride ten miles forward upon his own territories, upon which he had upwards of six hundred people attached to him, that the family seat was rich in natural, romantick beauties of rock, wood, and water, and that in my "morn of life" I had appropriated the finest descriptions, in the ancient *Classicks* to certain scenes there, which were thus associated in my mind. That when all this was considered, I should certainly pass a part of the year at home, and enjoy it the more from variety, and from bringing with me a share of the intellectual stores of the metropolis. He listened to all this, and kindly "hoped it might be as I now supposed."

He said, "A country gentleman should bring his lady to visit London as soon as he can, that they may have agreeable topicks for conversation when they are by themselves."

As I meditated trying my fortune in Westminster Hall, our conversation turned upon the profession of the law in England. JOHNSON "You must not indulge too sanguine hopes, should you be called to our bar. I was told, by a very sensible lawyer, that there are a great many chances against any man's success in the profession of the law, the candidates are so numerous, and those who get large practice so few. He said, it was by no means true that a man of good parts and application is sure of having business, though, he, indeed, allowed that if such a man could but appear in a few causes, his merit would be known, and he would get forward, but that the great risk was, that a man might pass half a life-time

¹ Mr Roswell was not called to the English bar until nine years later, viz, 1786, when he became a member of the Inner Temple. He was shortly afterwards appointed Recorder of Carlisle, through Lord Lonsdale's interest, about the same time that his countryman Douglas became Bishop of Salisbury. This "gave rise to the following epigram," which is certainly Mr Boswell's own composition —

"Of old, ere wise concord united this Isle,
Our neighbours of Scotland were foes
at Carlisle
But now what a change we have here
in the border,
When Douglas is bishop, and Boswell
recorder!"

in the Courts, and never have an opportunity of shewing his abilities "

We talked of employment being absolutely necessary to preserve the mind from wearying and growing fretful, especially in those who have a tendency to melancholy, and I mentioned to him a saying which somebody had related of an American savage, who, when an European was expatiating on all the advantages of money, put this question "Will it purchase *occupation*?" JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, this saying is too refined for a savage. And, Sir, money *will* purchase occupation, it will purchase all the conveniences of life, it will purchase variety of company, it will purchase all sorts of entertainment "

I talked to him of Forster's "Voyage to the South Seas," which pleased me, but I found he did not like it "Sir, (said he,) there is a great affectation of fine writing in it." BOSWELL "But he carries you along with him " JOHNSON. "No, Sir, he does not carry *me* along with him he leaves me behind him: or rather, indeed, he sets me before him for he makes me turn over many leaves at a time "

On Sunday, September 12, we went to the church of Ashbourne, which is one of the largest and most luminous that I have seen in any town of the same size I felt great satisfaction in considering that I was supported in my fondness of solemn public worship by the general concurrence and munificence of mankind

Johnson and Taylor were so different from each other, that I wondered at their preserving such an intimacy Their having been at school and college together, might, in some degree, account for this, but Sir Joshua Reynolds has furnished me with a stronger reason, for Johnson mentioned to him, that he had been told by Taylor he was to be his heir I shall not take upon me to animadvert upon this, but certain it is, that Johnson paid great attention to Taylor. He now, however, said to me, "Sir, I love him, but I do not love him more, my regard for him does not increase As it

For et Ad—Line 2 On "abilities" put the following note—"Now, at the distance of fifteen years since this conversation passed, the observation which I have had an opportunity of making in Westminster Hall has convinced me, that, however true the opinion of Dr Johnson's legal friend may have been some time ago, the same certainty of success cannot now be promised to the same display of merit The reasons, however, of the rapid rise of some, and the disappointment of others equally respectable, are such as it might seem invidious to mention, and would require a longer detail than would be proper for this work "1

¹ Johnson's warning as to being too unguine was justified by the event, for he had little or no practice The practical joke played upon him on the northern

circuit—the writ *quare paramento et habu*—is described in Twiss's "Life Ligon "

is said in the Apocrypha, 'his talk is of bullocks' * I do not suppose he is very fond of my company His habits are by no means sufficiently clerical this he knows that I see, and no man likes to live under the eye of perpetual disapprobation."

I have no doubt that a good many sermons were composed for Taylor by Johnson At this time I found, upon his table, a part of one which he had newly begun to write, and *Concio pro Taylors* appears in one of his diaries When to these circumstances we add the internal evidence from the power of thinking and style, in the collection which the Reverend Mr Hayes has published, with the significant title of "*Sermons left for publication* by the Reverend John Taylor, LL D," our conviction will be complete

I, however, would not have it thought, that Dr Taylor, though he could not write like Johnson, (as, indeed, who could?) did not sometimes compose sermons as good as those which we generally have from very respectable divines He shewed me one with notes on the margin in Johnson's handwriting, and I was present when he read another to Johnson, that he might have his opinion of it, and Johnson said it was "very well" These, we may be sure, were not Johnson's, for he was above little arts, or tricks of deception

Johnson was by no means of opinion, that every man of a learned profession should consider it as incumbent upon him, or as necessary to his credit, to appear as an authour When in the ardour of ambition for literary fame, I regretted to him one day that an eminent Judge had nothing of it, and therefore would leave no perpetual monument of himself to posterity "Alas, Sir, (said Johnson,) what a mass of confusion should we have if every Bishop and every Judge, every Lawyer, Physician, and Divine, were to write books"

I mentioned to Johnson a respectable person¹ of a very strong mind, who had little of that tenderness which is common to human nature, as an instance of which, when I suggested to him that he should invite his son, who had been settled ten years in foreign parts, to come home and pay him a visit, his answer was. "No, no, let him mind his business" JOHNSON "I do not agree with him, Sir, in this Getting money is not all a man's business. to cultivate kindness is a valuable part of the business of life"

In the evening, Johnson being in very good spirits, entertained us

* Ecclesiasticus, chap xxxviii v 25 The whole chapter may be read as an admirable illustration of the superiority of cultivated minds over the gross and illiterate

¹ Lord Auchinleck His son, however, did return to England in June, 1780
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with several characteristic portraits I regret that any of them escaped my retention and diligence I found, from experience, that to collect my friend's conversation so as to exhibit it with any degree of its original flavour, it was necessary to write it down without delay To record his sayings, after some distance of time, was like preserving or pickling long kept and faded fruits or other vegetables, which, when in that state, have little or nothing of their taste when fresh

I shall present my readers with a series of what I gathered this evening from the Johnsonian garden

"My friend, the late Earl of Corke, had a great desire to maintain the literary character of his family. he was a genteel man, but did not keep up the dignity of his rank. He was so generally civil, that nobody thanked him for it."

"Did we not hear so much said of Jack Wilkes, we should think more highly of his conversation Jack has great variety of talk, Jack is a scholar, and Jack has the manners of a gentleman. But after hearing his name sounded from pole to pole, as the phoenix of convivial felicity, we are disappointed in his company He has always been *at me* but I would do Jack a kindness, rather than not. The contest is now over."

"Garrick's gaiety of conversation has delicacy and elegance. Foote makes you laugh more, but Foote has the air of a buffoon paid for entertaining the company He, indeed, well deserves his hire"

"Colley Cibber once consulted me as to one of his birth day Odes, a long time before it was wanted. I objected very freely to several passages Cibber lost patience, and would not read his Ode to an end When we had done with criticism, we walked over to Richardson's, the authour of '*Clarissa*,' and I wondered to find Richardson displeased that I 'did not treat Cibber with more *respect*' Now, Sir, to talk of *respect* for a *player*!" (smiling disdainfully) BOSWELL "There, Sir, you are always heretical you never will allow merit to a player" JOHNSON "Merit, Sir! what merit? Do you respect a rope dancer, or a ballad singer?" BOSWELL "No, Sir but we respect a great player, as a man who can conceive lofty sentiments, and can express them gracefully" JOHNSON "What, Sir, a fellow who claps a hump on his back, and a lump on his leg, and cries, '*I am Richard the Third*?' Nay, Sir, a ballad-singer is a higher man, for he does two things; he repeats and he sings - there is both recitation and musick in his performance the player only recites" BOSWELL "My dear Sir! you may turn any thing into ridicule I allow, that a player of farce is not entitled to respect; he does a little thing. but he who can represent

exalted characters, and touch the noblest passions, has very respectable powers and mankind have agreed in admiring great talents for the stage. We must consider, too, that a great player does what very few are capable to do: his art is a very rare faculty *Who* can repeat Hamlet's Soliloquy, 'To be, or not to be,' as Garrick does it?" JOHNSON "Any body may Jemmy, there (a boy about eight years old, who was in the room) will do it as well in a week." BOSWELL. "No, no, Sir. and as a proof of the merit of great acting, and of the value which mankind set upon it, Garrick has got a hundred thousand pounds." JOHNSON. "Is getting a hundred thousand pounds a proof of excellence? That has been done by a scoundrel commissary"

This was most fallacious reasoning. I was *sure*, for once, that I had the best side of the argument I boldly maintained the just distinction between a tragedian and a mere theatrical droll, between those who rouse our terror and pity, and those who only make us laugh "If (said I) Betterton and Foote were to walk into this room, you would respect Betterton much more than Foote." JOHNSON "If Betterton were to walk into this room with Foote, Foote would soon drive him out of it. Foote, Sir, *quæritur* Foote, has powers superiour to them all"

On Monday, September 22, when at breakfast, I unguardedly said to Dr Johnson, "I wish I saw you and Mrs Macaulay together." He grew very angry, and, after a pause, while a cloud gathered on his brow, he burst out, "No, Sir, you would not see us quarrel, to make you sport. Don't you know that it is very uncivil to *put* two people against one another?" Then, checking himself, and wishing to be more gentle, he added, "I do not say you should be hanged or drowned for this, but it is very uncivil." Dr. Taylor thought him in the wrong, and spoke to him privately of it, but I afterwards acknowledged to Johnson that I was to blame, for I candidly owned, that I meant to express a desire to see a contest between Mr. Macaulay and him, but then I knew how the contest would end, so that I was to see him triumph. JOHNSON "Sir, you cannot be sure how a contest will end, and no man has a right to engage two people in a dispute by which their passions may be inflamed, and they may part with bitter resentment against each other. I would sooner keep company with a man from whom I must guard my pockets, than with a man who contrives to bring me into a dispute with somebody that he may hear it. This is the great fault of ———.¹ (naming one of our friends) endeavouring to introduce a

¹ Possibly Langton, as Mr Croker suggests

subject upon which he knows two people in the company differ."

BOSWELL "But he told me, Sir, he does it for instruction" JOHNSON "Whatever the motive be, Sir, the man who does so, does very wrong. He has no more right to instruct himself at such a risk, than he has to make two people fight a duel, that he may learn how to defend himself"

He found great fault with a gentleman of our acquaintance for keeping a bad table. "Sir, (said he,) when a man is invited to dinner, he is disappointed if he does not get something good. I advised Mrs Thrale, who has no card parties at her house, to give sweet meats, and such good things, in an evening, as are not commonly given, and she would find company enough come to her, for every body loves to have things which please the palate put in their way, without trouble or preparation" Such was his attention to the *minutiae* of life and manners

He thus characterised the Duke of Devonshire, grandfather of the present representative of that very respectable family "He was not a man of superiour abilities, but he was a man strictly faithful to his word. If, for instance, he had promised you an acorn, and none had grown that year in his woods, he would not have contented himself with that excuse, he would have sent to Denmark for it. So unconditional was he in keeping his word, so high as to the point of honour." This was a liberal testimony from the Tory Johnson to the virtue of a great Whig nobleman.

Mr. Burke's "Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, on the affairs of America," being mentioned, Johnson censured the composition much, and he ridiculed the definition of a free government, *viz.* "For any practical purpose, it is what the people think so."—"I will let the King of France govern me on those conditions, (said he,) for it is to be governed just as I please." And when Dr Taylor talked of a girl being sent to a parish workhouse, and asked how much she could be obliged to work. "Why, (said Johnson,) as much as is reasonable and what is that? as much as *she thinks* reasonable."

Dr Johnson obligingly proposed to carry me to see Islam, a romantick scene, now belonging to a family of the name of Port, but formerly the seat of the Congreves.¹ I suppose it is well described in some of the Tours. Johnson described it distinctly and vividly, at which I could not but express to him my wonder;

* Edit. 2, p 53.

¹ Mr Croker shows that Johnson or Boswell was in error here, as the place had always belonged to the Ports. Con-

greve had, however, visited there, and his favourite seat was shown to visitors

because, though my eyes, as he observed, were better than his, I could not by any means equal him in representing visible objects. I said, the difference between us in this respect was as that between a man who had a bad instrument, but plays well on it, and a man who has a good instrument, on which he can play very imperfectly.

I recollect a very fine amphitheatre surrounded with hills covered with wood, and walks neatly formed along the side of a rocky steep, on the quarter next the house, with recesses under projections of rock, over-shadowed with trees, in one of which recesses, we were told, Congreve wrote his "Old Bachelor." We viewed a remarkable natural curiosity at Islam, two rivers bursting near each other from the rock, not from immediate springs, but after having run for many miles under ground. Plott, in his "History of Staffordshire,"^a gives an account of this curiosity, but Johnson would not believe it, though we had the attestation of the gardener, who said, he had put in corks, where the river *Manifold* sinks into the ground, and had caught them in a net, placed before one of the openings where the water bursts out. Indeed, such subterraneous courses of water are found in various parts of our globe.^b

Talking of Dr. Johnson's unwillingness to believe extraordinary things, I ventured to say, "Sir, you come near Hume's argument against miracles, 'That it is more probable witnesses should lie, or be mistaken, than that they should happen.'" JOHNSON "Why, Sir, Hume, taking the proposition simply, is right. But the Christian revelation is not proved by the miracles alone, but as connected with prophecies, and with the doctrines in confirmation of which the miracles were wrought."

He repeated his observation, that the differences among Christians are really of no consequence. "For instance, (said he,) if a Protestant objects to a Papist, 'You worship images,' the Papist can answer, 'I do not insist on *your* doing it, you may be a very good Papist without it: I do it only as a help to my devotion.'" I said, the great article of Christianity is the revelation of immortality. Johnson admitted it was.

In the evening, a gentleman-farmer, who was on a visit at Dr. Taylor's, attempted to dispute with Johnson in favour of Mungo Campbell, who shot Alexander, Earl of Eglintoun, upon his having fallen, when retreating from his Lordship, who he believed was about to seize his gun, as he had threatened to do. He said, he should have done just as Campbell did. JOHNSON "Whoever

^a Page 89

^b See Plott's "History of Staffordshire," p. 88, and the authorities referred to by him

would do as Campbell did, deserves to be hanged; not that I could, as a juryman, have found him legally guilty of murder, but I am glad they found means to convict him."¹ The gentleman-farmer said, "A poor man has as much honour as a rich man, and Campbell had *that* to defend" Johnson exclaimed, "A poor man has no honour" The English yeoman, not dismayed, proceeded "Lord Eglintoune was a damned fool to run on upon Campbell, after being warned that Campbell would shoot him if he did" Johnson, who could not bear any thing like swearing, angrily replied, "He was *not* a damned fool he only thought too well of Campbell. He did not believe Campbell would be such a *damned* scoundrel, as to do so *damned* a thing." His emphasis on *damned*, accompanied with frowning looks, reproved his opponent's want of decorum in *his* presence

Talking of the danger of being mortified by rejection, when making approaches to the acquaintance of the great, I observed, "I am, however, generally for trying, 'Nothing venture, nothing have'" JOHNSON "Very true, Sir, but I have always been more afraid of failing, than hopeful of success" And, indeed, though he had all just respect for rank, no man ever less courted the favour of the great.

During this interview at Ashbourne, Johnson seemed to be more uniformly social, cheerful, and alert, than I had almost ever seen him He was prompt on great occasions and on small Taylor, who praised every thing of his own to excess, in short, "whose geese were all swans," as the proverb says, expatiated on the excellence of his bull dog, which he told us was "perfectly well shaped" Johnson, after examining the animal attentively, thus repressed the vain-glory of our host.—"No, Sir, he is *not* well shaped, for there is not the quick transition from the thickness of the fore-part to the *tenuity*—the thin part—behind, which a bull-dog ought to have." This *tenuity*, was the only *hard word* that I heard him use during this interview, and it will be observed, he instantly put another expression in its place Taylor said, a small bull-dog was as good as a large one. JOHNSON. "No, Sir, for, in proportion to his size, he has strength and your argument would prove that a good bull-dog may be as small as a mouse" It was amazing how he entered with perspicuity and keenness upon every thing that occurred in conversation Most men, whom I know, would no more think of discussing a question about a bull-dog, than of attacking a bull

¹ Mungo Campbell committed suicide in prison

I cannot allow any fragment whatever that floats in my memory concerning the great subject of this work to be lost. Though a small particular may appear trifling to some, it will be relished by others, while every little spark adds something to the general blaze and to please the true, candid, warm admirers of Johnson, and in any degree increase the splendour of his reputation, I bid defiance to the shafts of ridicule, or even of malignity. Showers of them have been discharged at my "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," yet it still sails unhurt along the stream of time, and, as an attendant upon Johnson,

"Pursues the triumph, and partakes the gale."

One morning after breakfast, when the sun shone bright, we walked out together, and "pored" for some time with placid inaction upon an artificial water-fall, which Dr. Taylor had made by building a strong dyke of stone across the river behind his garden. It was now somewhat obstructed by branches of trees and other rubbish, which had come down the river and settled close to it. Johnson, partly from a desire to see it play more lively, and partly from that inclination to activity which will animate, at times, the most inert and sluggish mortal, took a long pole which was lying on the bank, and pushed down several parcels of this wreck with painful assiduity, while I stood quietly by, wondering to behold the sage thus curiously employed, and smiling with an humorous satisfaction each time when he carried his point. He worked till he was quite out of breath, and having found a large dead cat so heavy that he could not move it after several efforts, 'Come, (said he, throwing down the pole,) *you* shall take it now;" which I accordingly did, and being a fresh man, soon made the cat tumble over the cascade. This may be laughed at as too trifling to record, but it is a small characteristic trait in the Flemish picture which I give of my friend, and in which, therefore, I mark the most minute particulars. And let it be remembered, that "*Æsop at play*" is one of the instructive apologues of antiquity.

I mentioned an old gentleman of our acquaintance whose memory was beginning to fail.—JOHNSON "There must be a diseased mind, where there is a failure of memory at seventy. A man's head, Sir, must be morbid if he fails so soon." My friend, being now himself sixty-eight, might think thus. but I imagine, that *threescore and ten*, the Psalmist's period of sound human life, in later ages may have a failure, though there be no disease in the constitution.

Talking of Rochester's Poems, he said, he had given them to Mr.

Steevens to castrate for the edition of the Poets, to which he was to write Prefaces Dr Taylor (the only time I ever heard him say any thing witty*) observed, that "if Rochester had been castrated himself, his exceptional poems would not have been written" I asked if Burnet had not given a good Life of Rochester. JOHNSON "We have a good *Death* there is not much *Life*" I asked whether Prior's Poems were to be printed entire: Johnson said they were. I mentioned Lord Hailes's censure of Prior, in his Preface to a collection of "Sacred Poems," by various hands, published by him at Edinburgh a great many years ago, where he mentions, "those impure tales which will be the eternal opprobrium of their ingenious authour" JOHNSON "Sir, Lord Hailes has forgot. There is nothing in Prior that will excite to lewdness If Lord Hailes thinks there is, he must be more combustible than other people" I instanced the tale of "Paulo Purganti and his Wife." JOHNSON. "Sir, there is nothing there, but that his wife wanted to be kissed, when poor Paulo was out of pocket No, Sir, Prior is a lady's book No lady is ashamed to have it standing in her library"

The hypochondriack disorder being mentioned, Dr. Johnson did not think it so common as I supposed—"Dr Taylor (said he) is the same one day as another Burke and Reynolds are the same. Beauclerk, except when in pain, is the same I am not so myself; but this I do not mention commonly"

I complained of a wretched changefulness, so that I could not preserve, for any long continuance, the same views of any thing. It was most comfortable to me to experience, in Dr Johnson's company, a relief from this uneasiness His steady vigorous mind held firm before me those objects which my own feeble and tremulous imagination frequently presented, in such a wavering state, that my reason could not judge well of them

Dr Johnson advised me to-day, to have as many books about me as I could; that I might read upon any subject upon which I had a desire for instruction at the time "What you read *then* (said he) you will remember, but if you have not a book immediately ready, and the subject moulds in your mind, it is a chance if you again have a desire to study it" He added, "If a man never has an eager desire for instruction, he should prescribe a task for himself. But it is better when a man reads from immediate inclination"

He repeated a good many lines of Horace's Odes, while we were in the chaise I remember particularly the Ode "*Eheu fugaces*"

He said, the dispute as to the comparative excellence of Homer

* I am told, that the Honourable Horace Walpole has a collection of *Bon Mots* by persons who never said but one

or Virgil^a was inaccurate. "We must consider (said he) whether Homer was not the greatest poet, though Virgil may have produced the finest poem. Virgil was indebted to Homer for the whole invention of the structure of an epick poem, and for many of his beauties."

He told me, that Bacon was a favourite authour with him, but he had never read his works till he was compiling the English Dictionary, in which, he said, I might see Bacon very often quoted. Mr Seward recollects his having mentioned, that a Dictionary of the English language might be compiled from Bacon's writings alone, and that he had once an intention of giving an edition of Bacon, at least of his English works, and writing the Life of that great man. Had he executed this intention, there can be no doubt that he would have done it in a most masterly manner. Mallet's Life of Bacon has no inconsiderable merit as an acute and elegant dissertation relative to its subject, but Mallet's mind was not comprehensive enough to embrace the vast extent of Lord Verulam's genius and research. Dr. Warburton therefore observed, with witty justness, "that Mallet in his Life of Bacon had forgotten that he was a philosopher, and if he should write the Life of the Duke of Marlborough, which he had undertaken to do, he would probably forget that he was a General."

Wishing to be satisfied what degree of truth there was in a story which a friend of Johnson's and mine had told me to his disadvantage,¹ I mentioned it to him in direct terms, and it was to this effect. that a gentleman who had lived in great intimacy with him, shewn him much kindness, and even relieved him from a spunging-house, having afterwards fallen into bad circumstances, was one day, when Johnson was at dinner with him, seized for debt, and carried to prison, that Johnson sat still undisturbed, and went on eating and drinking, upon which the gentleman's sister, who was present, could not suppress her indignation. "What, Sir, (said she), are you so unfeeling, as not even to offer to go to my brother in his distress, you who have been so much obliged to him?" And that Johnson answered, "Madam, I owe him no obligation; what he did for me he would have done for a dog."

^a I am informed by Mr. Langton, that a great many years ago he was present when this question was agitated between Dr. Johnson and Mr. Burke, and, to use Johnson's phrase, they "talked their best," Johnson for Homer, Burke for Virgil. It may well be supposed to have been one of the ablest and most brilliant contests that ever was exhibited. How much must we regret that it has not been preserved.

¹ Mr Croker found, from a portion of Boswell's original MS which he had seen, that the narrator of the story was

Beauclerk, and the gentleman and his sister Mr and Miss Hervey

Johnson assured me, that the story was absolutely false; but like a man conscious of being in the right, and desirous of completely vindicating himself from such a charge, he did not arrogantly rest on a mere denial, and on his general character, but proceeded thus:—"Sir, I was very intimate with that gentleman, and was once relieved by him from an arrest, but I never was present when he was arrested, never knew that he was arrested, and I believe he never was in difficulties after the time when he relieved me. I loved him much, yet, in talking of his general character, I may have said, though I do not remember that I ever did so, that as his generosity proceeded from no principle, but was part of his profusion, he would do for a dog what he would do for a friend but I never applied this remark to any particular instance, and certainly not to his kindness to me. If a profuse man, who does not value his money, and gives a large sum to a whore, gives half as much, or an equally large sum to relieve a friend, it cannot be esteemed as virtue. This was all that I could say of that gentleman, and, if said at all, it must have been said after his death. Sir, I would have gone to the world's end to relieve him. The remark about the dog, if made by me, was such a sally as might escape one when painting a man highly."¹

On Tuesday, September 23, Johnson was remarkably cordial to me. It being necessary for me to return to Scotland soon, I had fixed on the next day for my setting out, and I felt a tender concern at the thought of parting with him. He had, at this time, frankly communicated to me many particulars, which are inserted in this work in their proper places, and once, when I happened to mention that the expence of my jaunt would come to much more than I had computed, he said, "Why, Sir, if the expence were to be an inconvenience, you would have reason to regret it but, if you have had the money to spend, I know not that you could have purchased as much pleasure with it in any other way."

During this interview at Ashbourne, Johnson and I frequently talked with wonderful pleasure of mere trifles which had occurred in our tour to the Hebrides, for it had left a most agreeable and lasting impression upon his mind.

He found fault with me for using the phrase to *make* money. "Don't you see (said he) the impropriety of it? To *make* money

Cor et Ad—Line 10. After 'did,' read "say"

¹ It may be reasonably suspected that the whole story was founded on a perversion of Johnson's singular declaration

of his affection for Hervey. "If you call a dog Hervey, I shall love him."

is to coin it: you should say *get money*." The phrase, however, is, I think, pretty current. But Johnson was at all times jealous of infractions upon the genuine English language, and prompt to repress colloquial barbarisms, such as, *pledging myself*, for *undertaking*, *line*, for *department* or *branch*, as, the *civil line*, the *banking line*. He was particularly indignant against the almost universal use of the word *idea* in the sense of *notion* or *opinion*, when it is clear that *idea* can only signify something of which an image can be formed in the mind. We may have an *idea* or *image* of a mountain, a tree, a building, but we cannot surely have an *idea* or *image* of an *argument* or *proposition*. Yet we hear the sages of the law "delivering their *ideas* upon the question under consideration," and the first speakers in Parliament "entirely coinciding in the *idea* which has been ably stated by an honourable member;"—or "reprobating an *idea* unconstitutional, and fraught with the most dangerous consequences to a great and free country." Johnson called this "modern cant."

I perceived that he pronounced the word *heard*, as if spelt with a double *c*, *heer'd*, instead of sounding it *herd*, as is most usually done. He said, his reason was, that if it were pronounced *herd*, there would be a single exception from the English pronunciation of the syllable *ear*, and he thought it better not to have that exception.

He praised Ganger's¹ "Ode on Solitude," in Dodsley's collection, and recited, with great energy, the exordium

"O Solitude, romantick maid,
Whether by nodding towers you tread;
Or haunt the desert's trackless gloom,
Or hover o'er the yawning tomb,
Or climb the Andes' clifted side,
Or by the Nile's coy source abide,
Or, starting from your half-year's sleep,
From Hecla view the thawing deep,
Or, at the purple dawn of day,
'Tadnor's marble wastes survey"

observing, "This, Sir, is very noble."

In the evening our gentleman-farmer, and two others, entertained themselves and the company with a great number of tunes on the fiddle. Johnson desired to have "Let ambition fire thy mind,"

¹ In his second edition Boswell amended this and other mistakes in the spelling of proper names.

played over again, and appeared to give a patient attention to it; though he owned to me that he was very insensible to the power of musick. I told him, that it affected me to such a degree, as often to agitate my nerves painfully, producing in my mind alternate sensations of pathetick dejection, so that I was ready to shed tears, and of daring resolution, so that I was inclined to rush into the thickest part of a battle. "Sir (said he,) I should never hear it, if it made me such a fool."

Much of the effect of musick, I am satisfied, is owing to association of ideas. That air, which instantly and irresistibly excites in the Swiss, when in a foreign land, the *maladie du pays*, has, I am told, no intrinsick power of sound. And I know from my own experience, that Scotch reels, though brisk, make me melancholy, because I used to hear them in my early years, at a time when Mr Pitt called for soldiers "from the mountains of the north," and numbers of brave Highlanders were going abroad, never to return. Whereas the airs in "The Beggar's Opera," many of which are very soft, never fail to render me gay, because they are associated with the warm sensations and high spirits of London. This evening, while some of the tunes of ordinary composition were played with no great skill, my frame was agitated, and I was conscious of a generous attachment to Dr. Johnson, as my preceptor and friend, mixed with an affectionate regret that he was an old man, whom I should probably lose in a short time. I thought I could defend him at the point of my sword. My reverence and affection for him were in full glow. I said to him, "My dear Sir, we must meet every year, if you don't quarrel with me." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, you are more likely to quarrel with me, than I with you. My regard for you is greater almost than I have words to express; but I do not choose to be always repeating it, write it down in the first leaf of your pocket book, and never doubt of it again."

I talked to him of misery being "the doom of man," in this life, as displayed in his "Vanity of Human Wishes." Yet I observed that things were done upon the supposition of happiness, grand houses were built, fine gardens were made, splendid places of publick amusement were contrived, and crowded with company. JOHNSON. "Alas, Sir, these are all only struggles for happiness. When I first entered Ranelagh, it gave an expansion and gay sensation to my mind, such as I never experienced any where else. But, as Xerxes wept when he viewed his immense army, and considered that not one of that great multitude would be alive a hundred years afterwards, so it went to my heart to consider that there was not one in all that brilliant circle, that was not afraid

to go home and think, but that the thoughts of each individual there, would be distressing when alone." This reflection was experimentally just. The feeling of languor,* which succeeds the animation of gaiety, is itself a very severe pain; and when the mind is then vacant, a thousand disappointments and vexations rush in and excruciate. Will not many even of my fairest readers allow this to be true?

I suggested, that being in love, and flattered with hopes of success, or having some favourite scheme in view for the next day, might prevent that wretchedness of which we had been talking. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it may sometimes be so as you suppose, but my conclusion is in general but too true."

While Johnson and I stood in calm conference by ourselves in Dr Taylor's garden, at a pretty late hour, in a serene autumn night, looking up to the heavens, I directed the discourse to the subject of a future state. My friend was in a placid and most benignant frame. "Sir, (said he,) I do not imagine that all things will be made clear to us immediately after death, but that the ways of Providence will be explained to us very gradually." I ventured to ask him whether although the words of some texts of Scripture seemed strong in support of the dreadful doctrine of an eternity of punishment, we might not hope that the denunciation was figurative, and would not literally be executed. JOHNSON. "Sir, you are to consider the intention of punishment in a future state. We have no reason to be sure that we shall then be no longer liable to offend against God. We do not know that even the angels are quite in a state of security, nay we know that some of them have fallen. It may, therefore, perhaps be necessary, in order to preserve both men and angels in a state of rectitude, that they should have continually before them the punishment of those who have deviated from it; but we may hope that by some other means a fall from rectitude may be prevented. Some of the texts of Scripture upon this subject are, as you observe, indeed strong, but they may admit of a mitigated interpretation." He talked to me upon this awful and delicate question in a gentle tone, and as if afraid to be decisive.

After supper I accompanied him to his apartment, and at my request he dictated to me an argument in favour of the negro who

* Pope mentions,

"Stretch'd on the rack of a too easy chair"

But I recollect a couplet quite apposite to my subject in "Virtue, an Ethick Epistle," a beautiful and instructive poem, by an anonymous writer, in 1758, who, treating of pleasure in excess, says,

"Full languor, suffering on the rack of bliss,
Confess that man was never made for this."

was then claiming his liberty, in an action in the Court of Session in Scotland * He had always been very zealous against slavery in every form, in which I with all deference thought that he discovered "a zeal without knowledge." Upon one occasion, when in company with some very grave men at Oxford, his toast was, "Here's to the next insurrection of the negroes in the West-Indies" His violent prejudice against our West-Indian and American settlers appeared whenever there was an opportunity. Towards the conclusion of his "Taxation no Tyranny," he says, "how is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?" and in his conversation with Mr Wilkes,^b he asked, "Where did Beckford and Trecothick learn English?" That Trecothick could both speak and write good English is well known. I myself was favoured with his correspondence concerning the brave Corsicans And that Beckford could speak it with a spirit of honest resolution even to his Majesty, as his "faithful Lord-Mayor of London," is commemorated by the noble monument erected to him in Guildhall¹

* This being laid up somewhere amidst my multiplicity of papers at Auchinleck, has escaped my search for this work, but when found, I shall take care that my readers shall have it

^b See page 149 of this volume

Cor et Ad—After line 17, read—"His argument for the negro was as follows [*Third Edition*—The argument dictated by Dr Johnson was as follows]—

"It must be agreed that in most ages many countries have had part of their inhabitants in a state of slavery, yet it may be doubted whether slavery can ever be supposed the natural condition of man It is impossible not to conceive that men in their original state were equal, and very difficult to imagine how one would be subjected to another but by violent compulsion An individual may, indeed, forfeit his liberty by a crime, but he cannot by that crime forfeit the liberty of his children What is true of a criminal seems true likewise of a captive A man may accept life from a conquering enemy on condition of perpetual servitude, but it is very doubtful whether he can entail that servitude on his descendants, for no man can stipulate without commission for another The condition which he himself accepts, his son or grandson perhaps would have rejected If we should admit, what perhaps may with more reason be denied, that there are certain relations between man and man which may make slavery necessary and just, yet it can never be proved that he who is now sung for his freedom ever stood in any of those relations He is certainly subject by no law, but that of violence, to his present master, who pretends no claim to his obedience, but that he bought him from a merchant of slaves, whose right to sell him never was examined It is said that according to the constitutions of Jamaica he was legally enslaved, these constitutions are merely positive, and apparently injurious to the rights of mankind, because whoever is exposed to sale is condemned to slavery without appeal, by whatever fraud or violence he might have been originally brought into the merchant's power In our own time Princes have been sold, by wretches to whose care they were entrusted, that they might have an European education, but when once they were brought to a market in the plantations, little would avail either their dignity or their wrongs The laws of Jamaica afford a Negro no redress His colour is considered as a sufficient testimony against him It is

¹ It has been doubted whether these words on the monument were those actually addressed to the king It is certain, however, that the language used

was sufficiently bold to bring the colour to the king's cheeks, and fill the minds of the courtiers with alarm and indignation—See *Jesse's Life of George III*

When I said now to Johnson, that I was afraid I kept him too late up. "No, Sir, (said he,) I don't care though I sit all night with you." This was an animated speech from a man in his sixty-ninth year.

Had I been as attentive not to displease him as I ought to have been, I know not but this vigil might have been fulfilled, but I unluckily entered upon the controversy concerning the right of Great-Britain to tax America, and attempted to argue in favour of our fellow-subjects on the other side of the Atlantick. I insisted that America might be very well governed, and made to yield a sufficient revenue by the means of *influence*, as exemplified in Ireland, while the people might be pleased with the imagination

to be lamented that moral right should ever give way to political convenience. But if temptations of interest are sometimes too strong for human virtue, let us at least retain a virtue where there is no temptation to quit it. In the present case there is apparent right on one side, and no convenience on the other. Inhabitants of this island can neither gain riches nor power by taking away the liberty of any part of the human species. The sum of the argument is this —No man is by nature the property of another. The defendant is, therefore, by nature free. The rights of nature must be some way forfeited before they can be justly taken away. That the defendant has by any act forfeited the rights of nature we require to be proved, and if no proof of such forfeiture can be given, we doubt not but the justice of the court will declare him free.

"I record Dr Johnson's argument fairly upon this particular case, where, perhaps, he was in the right. But I beg leave to enter my most solemn protest against his general doctrine with respect to the *Slave Trade*. For I will resolutely say—that his unfavourable notion of it was owing to prejudice, and imperfect or false information. The wild and dangerous attempt which has for some time been persisted in to obtain an act of our Legislature, to abolish so very important and necessary a branch of commercial interest, must have been crushed at once, had not the insignificance of the zealots who vainly took the lead in it, made the vast body of Planters, Merchants, and others, whose immense properties are involved in that trade, reasonably enough suppose that there could be no danger. The encouragement which the attempt has received excites my wonder and indignation, and though some men of superior abilities have supported it, whether from a love of temporary popularity, when prosperous, or a love of general mischief when desperate, my opinion is unshaken. To abolish a *status*, which in all ages God has sanctioned, and man has continued, would not only be *robery* to an innumerable class of our fellow-subjects, but it would be extreme cruelty to the African Savages, a portion of whom it saves from massacre, or intolerable bondage in their own country, and introduces into a much happier state of life, especially now when their passage to the West-Indies and their treatment there is humanely regulated. To abolish that trade would be to

— shut the gates of mercy on mankind."

"Whatever may have passed elsewhere concerning it, The HOUSE OF LORDS is wise and independent.

Intaminatis fulget honoribus,
Nec sumit aut ponit secures
Arbitrio populæ auræ

"I have read, conversed, and thought much upon the subject, and would recommend to all who are capable of conviction, an excellent Tract by my learned and ingenious friend John Ranby, Esq. entitled 'Doubts on the Abolition of the Slave Trade.' To Mr Ranby's 'Doubts,' I will apply Lord Chancellor Hardwicke's expression in praise of a Scotch Law Book, called 'Dileton's Doubts,' 'His Doubts, (said his Lordship,) are better than most people's *Certainties*.'"

of their participating of the British constitution, by having a body of representatives without whose consent money could not be exacted from them. Johnson could not bear my thus opposing his avowed opinion, which he had exerted himself with an extreme degree of heat to enforce, and the violent agitation into which he was thrown while answering, or rather reprimanding me, alarmed me so that I heartily repented of my having unthinkingly introduced the subject. I myself however grew warm, and the change was great, from the calm state of philosophical discussion in which we had a little before been pleasingly employed.

I talked of the corruption of the British parliament, in which I alledged that any question, however unreasonable or unjust, might be carried by a venal majority, and I spoke with high admiuation of the Roman Senate, as if composed of men sincerely desirous to resolve what they should think best for their country. My friend would allow no such character to the Roman Senate, and he maintained that the British parliament was not corrupt, and that there was no occasion to corrupt its members, asserting, that there was hardly ever any question of great importance before parliament, any question in which a man might not very well vote either upon one side or the other. He said there had been none in his time except that respecting America.

We were fatigued by the contest, which was produced by my want of caution, and he was not then in the humour to slide into easy and cheerful talk. It therefore so happened, that we were after an hour or two very willing to separate and go to bed.

On Wednesday, September 24, I went into Dr Johnson's room before he got up, and finding that the storm of the preceding night was quite laid, I sat down upon his bed side, and he talked with as much readiness and good humour as ever. He recommended to me to plant a considerable part of a large moonish farm which I had purchased, and he made several calculations of the expence and profit, for he delighted in exercising his mind on the science of numbers. He pressed upon me the importance of planting at the first in a very sufficient manner, quoting the saying, "*In bello non licet his errare*," and adding, "this is equally true in planting."

I spoke with gratitude of Dr Taylor's hospitality, and as evidence that it was not on account of his good table alone that Johnson visited him often, I mentioned a little anecdote which had escaped my friend's recollection, and at hearing which repeated, he smiled. One evening when I was sitting with him, Frank delivered this message, "Sir, Dr Taylor sends his compliments to you, and begs you will dine with him to-morrow. He has got a hare."—"My

compliments (said Johnson,) and I'll dine with him, hare or rabbit "

After breakfast I departed, and pursued my journey northwards. I took my post-chaise from the Green Man, a very good inn at Ashbourne, the mistress of which, a mighty civil gentlewoman, curtsying very low, presented me with an engraving of the sign of her house, to which she had subjoined, in her own hand-writing, an address in such singular simplicity of style, that I have preserved it pasted upon one of the boards of my original Journal at this time, and shall here insert it for the amusement of my readers :

" M Killingley's duty waits upon Mr Boswell, is exceedingly obliged to him for this favour, whenever he comes this way, hopes for a continuance of the same. Would Mr Boswell name the house to his extensive acquaintance, it would be a singular favour confer'd on one who has it not in her power to make any other return but her most grateful thanks, and sincerest prayers for his happiness in time, and in a blessed eternity.

" Tuesday morn "

From this meeting at Ashbourne I derived a considerable accession to my Johnsonian store I communicated my original Journal to Sir William Forbes, in whom I have always placed deserved confidence; and what he wrote to me concerning it is so much to my credit as the biographer of Johnson, that my readers will, I hope, grant me their indulgence for here inserting it, " It is not once or twice going over it (says Sir William) that will satisfy me, for I find in it a high degree of instruction as well as entertainment, and I derive more benefit from Dr Johnson's admirable discussions than I should be able to draw from his personal conversation, for I suppose there is not a man in the world to whom he discloses his sentiments so freely as to yourself "

I cannot omit a curious circumstance which occurred at Edensor-inn, close by Chatsworth, to survey the magnificence of which I had gone a considerable way out of my road to Scotland. The inn was then kept by a very jolly landlord, whose name I think was Malton. He happened to mention that " the celebrated Dr Johnson had been in his house " I inquired *who* this Dr Johnson was, that I might hear mine host's notion of him " Sir, (said he,) Johnson, the great writer, *Oddity*, as they call him. He's the greatest writer in England, he writes for the ministry, he has a correspondence abroad, and lets them know what's going on "

My friend, who had a thorough dependance upon the authenticity

of my relation without any *embellishment*, as *falsehood* or *fiction* is too gently called, laughed a good deal at this representation of himself.

Mr Boswell to Dr. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Sept 29, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—By the first post I inform you of my safe arrival at my own house, and that I had the comfort of finding my wife and children all in good health.

"When I look back upon our late interview, it appears to me to have answered expectation better than almost any scheme of happiness that I ever put in execution My Journal is stored with wisdom and wit; and my memory is filled with the recollection of lively and affectionate feelings, which now, I think, yield me more satisfaction than at the time when they were first excited I have experienced this upon other occasions. I will be obliged to you if you will explain it to me, for it seems wonderful that pleasure should be more vivid at a distance than when near I wish you may find yourself in the humour to do me this favour, but I flatter myself with no strong hope of it, for I have observed, that unless upon very serious occasions, your letters to me are not *answers* to those which I write."

[I then expressed to him much uneasiness that I had mentioned to him the name of the gentleman who had told me the story so much to his disadvantage, the truth of which he had completely refuted, for that my having done so might be interpreted as a breach of confidence, and offend one whose society I valued.—therefore earnestly requesting that no notice might be taken of it to any body, till I should be in London, and have an opportunity to talk it over with the gentleman.]

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—You will wonder, or you have wondered, why no letter has come from me. What you wrote at your return, had in it such a strain of cowardly caution as gave me no pleasure. I could not well do what you wished, I had no need to vex you with a refusal. I have seen Mr. ———, and as to him have set all right, without any inconvenience, so far as I know, to you. Mrs. Thrale had forgot the story You may now be at ease.

"And at ease I certainly wish you, for the kindness that you showed in coming so long a journey to see me. It was pity to keep

you so long in pain, but, upon reviewing the matter, I do not see what I could have done better than as I did.

"I hope you found at your return my dear enemy and all her little people quite well, and had no reason to repent your journey. I think on it with great gratitude.

"I was not well when you left me at the Doctor's, and I grew worse, yet I staid on, and at Lichfield was very ill. Travelling, however, did not make me worse; and when I came to London I complied with a summons to go to Brighthelmston, where I saw Beauclerk, and staid three days.

"Our club has recommenced last Friday, but I was not there. Langton has another wench.* Mrs. Thrale is in hopes of a young brewer. They got by their trade last year a very large sum, and their expences are proportionate

"Mrs. Williams's health is very bad. And I have had for some time a very difficult and laborious respiration, but I am better by purges, abstinence, and other methods. I am yet however much behind-hand in my health and rest.

"Dr. Blair's sermons are now universally commended, but let him think that I had the honour of first finding and first praising his excellencies. I did not stay to add my voice to that of the publick

"My dear friend, let me thank you once more for your visit; you did me great honour, and I hope met with nothing that displeased you. I staid long at Ashbourne, not much pleased, yet awkward at departing. I then went to Lichfield, where I found my friend at Stowhill^b very dangerously diseased. Such is life. Let us try to pass it well, whatever it be, for there is surely something beyond it.

"Well, now I hope all is well, write as soon as you can to, dear Sir,

"Your affectionate servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"London, Nov 25, 1777."

To Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON,

"Edinburgh, Nov 29, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—This day's post has at length relieved me from much uneasiness, by bringing me a letter from you. I was, indeed, doubly uneasy,—on my own account and yours. I was very anxious to be secured against any bad consequences from my imprudence in mentioning the gentleman's name who had told me

* A daughter born to him.

^b Mrs. Aston.

a story to your disadvantage, and as I could hardly suppose it possible, that you would delay so long to make me easy, unless you was ill, I was not a little apprehensive about you. You must not be offended when I venture to tell you that you appear to me to have been too rigid upon this occasion. The '*cowardly caution which gave you no pleasure*,' was suggested to me by a friend here, to whom I mentioned the strange story and the detection of its falsity, as an instance how one may be deceived by what is apparently very good authority. But, as I am still persuaded, that as I might have obtained the truth, without mentioning the gentleman's name, it was wrong in me to do it, I cannot see that you are just in blaming my caution. But if you were ever so just in your disapprobation, might you not have dealt more tenderly with me?

"I went to Auchinleck about the middle of October, and passed some time with my father very comfortably

* * * * *

"I am engaged in a criminal prosecution against a country schoolmaster, for indecent behaviour to his female scholars. There is no statute against such abominable conduct; but it is punishable at common law. I will be obliged to you for your assistance in this extraordinary trial. I ever am, my dear Sir,

"Your faithful humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL"

About this time I wrote to Johnson, giving him an account of the decision of the *Negro cause*, by the Court of Session, which by those who hold even the mildest and best regulated slavery in abomination, (of which number I do not hesitate to declare that I am none,) should be remembered with high respect, and to the credit of Scotland, for it went upon a much broader ground than the case of *Somerset*, which was decided in England,* being truly the general question, whether a perpetual obligation of service to one master in any mode should be sanctioned by the law of a free country. A negro, then called *Joseph Knight*, a native of Africa, who having been brought to Jamaica in the usual course of the slave trade, and purchased by a Scotch gentleman in that island, had attended his master to Scotland, where it was officiously suggested to him that he would be found entitled to his liberty without any limitation. He accordingly brought his action, in the course of which the advocates on both sides did themselves great honour. Mr Mac-

* See State Trials, Vol. XI p. 339, and Mr Hargrave's argument.

laurin has had the praise of Johnson, for his argument¹ in favour of the negro, and Mr. Macconochie distinguished himself on the same side, by his ingenuity and extraordinary research. Mr Cullen, on the part of the master, discovered good information and sound reasoning, in which he was well supported by Mr. James Fergusson, a man remarkable for a manly understanding, and a knowledge both of books and of the world. But I cannot too highly praise the speech which Mr. Henry Dundas generously contributed to the cause of the sooty stranger. Mr. Dundas's Scottish accent, which has been so often in vain obtruded as an objection to his powerful abilities in parliament, was no disadvantage to him in his own country. And I do declare, that upon this memorable question he impressed me, and I believe all his audience, with such feelings as were produced by some of the most eminent orations of antiquity. This testimony I liberally give to the excellence of an old friend, with whom it has been my lot to differ very widely upon many political topics, yet I persuade myself without malice. A great majority of the Lords of Session decided for the negro. But four of their number, the Lord President, Lord Elphinstone, Lord Monboddo, and Lord Covington,¹ resolutely maintained the lawfulness of a *status*, which has been acknowledged in all ages and countries, and that when freedom flourished, as in old Greece and Rome.

¹ The motto to it was happily chosen—

“———*Nimum ne crede colori*”

I cannot avoid mentioning a circumstance no less strange than true, that a brother Advocate in considerable practice but of whom it certainly cannot be said, *in genusa dulci et fideliter artes*, asked Mr. MacLaurin, with a face of suppliant assurance, “Are these words your own?”

Cor et Ad—Note. For “*Nimum ne crede colori*” read “*Quamvis ille niger, quamvis tu Candidus esses*”²

¹ Lord Auchinleck's judgment was characteristic. “Although, in the plantations, they had laid hold of the poor blacks, and made slaves of them, yet I do not think that is agreeable to humanity, not to say to the Christian religion. Is a man a slave because he is black? No. He is our brother, and he is a man, although not our colour, he is in a land of liberty, with his wife and child let him remain *there*”—*Hales's Decisions*, v. ii. 777.

Some passages in other judgments of his are in the same key. “The present question gives me satisfaction. It is happy to see the wages of iniquity still outstanding fall to be paid by the offend-

ing persons” (v. ii. 586). “Politicians afford us new dishes every day. Suppose that the magistrates of Paisley did not choose to make a freehold qualification; suppose that Wilson had asked to purchase, might not the magistrates have said, ‘We do not like your face’?”—*Ibid* 614.

“Here is a picture, and the only question is, whether it has been well drawn. There has been a great bungling *here*, in a matter of the *highest consequence*. I do not know what to make of it. I think the picture is ill drawn”—*Ibid* p. 699.

² This is one of Boswell's amusing mistakes.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—This is the time of the year in which all express their good wishes to their friends, and I send mine to you and your family. May your lives be long, happy, and good. I have been much out of order, but, I hope, do not grow worse.

"The crime of the schoolmaster whom you are engaged to prosecute is very great, and may be suspected to be too common. In our law it would be a breach of the peace, and a misdemeanour; that is, a kind of indefinite crime, not capital, but punishable at the discretion of the court. You cannot want matter all that needs to be said will easily occur.

"Mr Shaw, the authour of the Gaelick Grammar, desires me to make a request for him to Lord Eglintoun, that he may be appointed Chaplain to one of the new-raised regiments.

"All our friends are as they were, little has happened to them of either good or bad. Mrs. Thrale ran a great black hair-dressing pin into her eye, but by great evacuation she kept it from inflaming, and it is almost well. Miss Reynolds has been out of order, but is better. Mrs. Williams is in a very poor state of health.

"If I should write on, I should, perhaps, write only complaints, and therefore I will content myself with telling you, that I love to think on you, and to hear from you, and that I am, dear Sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"December 27, 1777"

In 1778, Johnson gave the world a luminous proof that the vigour of his mind in all its faculties, whether memory, judgement, or imagination, was not in the least abated, for this year came out the first four volumes of his "Prefaces, biographical and critical, to the most eminent of the English Poets,"* published by the booksellers of London. The remaining volumes came out in the year 1780. The Poets were selected by the several booksellers who had the honorary copy-right, which is still preserved among them by mutual compact, notwithstanding the decision of the House of Lords against the perpetuity of Literary Property. We have his own authority,* that by his recommendation the Poems of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden, were added to the collection. Of this work I shall speak more particularly hereafter.

* Life of Watts

Second Edition.—The paragraph beginning "In 1778," &c., shifted to the end of the year, and inserted after the paragraph following the letter to Hussey of December 29, 1778

To Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON

"Edinburgh, Jan 8 1778

"DEAR SIR,—Your congratulations upon a new year are mixed with complaint: mine must be so too. My wife has for some time been very ill, having been confined to the house these three months by a severe cold, attended with alarming symptoms

[Here I gave a particular account of the distress which the person, upon every account most dear to me, suffered, and of the dismal state of apprehension in which I now was. Adding, that I never stood more in need of his consoling philosophy]

"Did you ever look at a book written by Wilson, a Scotsman, under the Latin name of *Volusenus*, according to the custom of literary men at a certain period. It is entitled '*De Animi Tranquillitate*?' I earnestly desire tranquillity. *Bona res quies*, but I fear I shall never attain it: for, when unoccupied, I grow gloomy, and occupation agitates me to feverishness.

* * * * *

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—To a letter so interesting as your last, it is proper to return some answer, however little I may be disposed to write.

"Your alarm at your lady's illness was reasonable, and not disproportionate to the appearance of the disorder. I hope your physical friend's conjecture is now verified, and all fear of a consumption at an end a little care and exercise will then restore her. London is a good air for ladies; and if you bring her hither, I will do for her what she did for me—I will retire from my apartments for her accommodation. Behave kindly to her, and keep her cheerful

"You always seem to call for tenderness. Know then, that in the first month of the present year I very highly esteem and very cordially love you. I hope to tell you this at the beginning of every year as long as we live; and why should we trouble ourselves to tell or hear it oftener?

"Tell Veronica, Euphemia, and Alexander, that I wish them, as well as their parents, many happy years.

"You have ended the negro's cause much to my mind. Lord Auchinleck and dear Lord Hailes were on the side of liberty. Lord

Hailes's name reproaches me, but if he saw my languid neglect of my own affairs, he would rather pity than resent my neglect of his. I hope to mend, *ut et mihi vivam et amicis*. I am, dear Sir,

"Your's affectionately,

"SAM JOHNSON.

ד'תרט"ח 24, 1778

"My service to my fellow-traveller, Joseph "

Second Edition—After the last line, *read*—Johnson maintained a long and intimate friendship with Mr Welch, who succeeded the celebrated Henry Kiehl as one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for Westminster, kept a regular office for the police of that great district, and discharged his important trust, for many years, faithfully and ably. Johnson, who had in eager and unceasing curiosity to know human life in all its variety told me, that he attended Mr Welch in his office for a whole winter, to hear the examinations of the culprits, but that he found in almost uniform tenor of misfortune, wretchedness, and profligacy. Mr Welch's health being impaired, he was advised to try the effect of a warm climate, and Johnson, by his interest with Mr Chamier, procured him leave of absence to go to Italy, and a promise that the pension or salary of two hundred pounds a year, which Government allowed him, should not be discontinued. Mr Welch accordingly went abroad, accompanied by his daughter Anne, a young lady of uncommon talents and literature.

"TO SAUNDERS WELCH, ESQ AT THE ENGLISH COFFEE HOUSE, ROME

"DEAR SIR,—To have suffered one of my best and dearest friends to pass almost two years in foreign countries without a letter, has a very shameful appearance of inattention. But the truth is, that there was no particular time in which I had any thing particular to say, and general expressions of good will, I hope, our long friendship is grown too solid to want.

"Of publick affairs you have information from the news-papers wherever you go, for the English keep no secret, and of other things, Mrs Nollekens informs you. My intelligence could therefore be of no use, and Miss Nancy's letters make it unnecessary to write to you for information. I was likewise for some time out of humour, to find that motion, and nearer approaches to the sun, did not restore your health so fast as I expected. Of your health, the accounts have lately been more pleasing, and I have the gratification of imagining to myself a length of years which I hope you have gained, and of which the enjoyment will be improved by a succession of images and observations which your journeys and various residence have enabled you to make and accumulate. You have travelled with this felicity almost peculiar to yourself, that your companion is not to part from you at your journey's end, but you are to live on together, to help each other's recollection, and to supply each other's omissions. The world has few greater pleasures than that which two friends enjoy, in tracing back, at some distant time, those transactions and events through which they have passed together. One of the old man's miseries is that he cannot easily find a companion able to partake with him of the past. You and your fellow-traveller have this comfort in store that your conversation will be not easily exhausted, one will always be glad to say what the other will always be willing to hear.

"That you may enjoy this pleasure long, your health must have your constant attention. I suppose you propose to return this year. There is no need of haste. do not come hither before the height of summer, that you may fall gradually into the inconveniences of your native climate. July seems to be the proper month. August and September will prepare you for the winter. After having travelled so far to find health, you must take care not to lose it at home, and I hope a little care will effectually preserve it.

"Miss Nancy has doubtless kept a constant and copious journal. She must not expect to be welcome when she returns, without a great mass of information. Let her review her journal often, and set down what she finds herself to have omitted,

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Feb 26, 1778

"MY DEAR SIR,—Why I have delayed, for near a month, to thank you for your last affectionate letter, I cannot say, for my mind has been in better health these three weeks than for some years past. I believe I have evaded till I could send you a copy of Lord Hailes's opinion on the negro's cause, which he wishes you to read, and correct any errors that there may be in the language, for, says he, 'we live in a critical, though not a learned age, and I seek to screen myself under the shield of Ajax.' I communicated to him your apology for keeping the sheets of his 'Annals' so long. He says, 'I am sorry to see that Dr. Johnson is in a state of languor. Why should a sober Christian, neither an enthusiast nor a fanatic, be very merry or very sad?' I envy his Lordship's comfortable constitution; but well do I know that languor and dejection will afflict the best, however excellent their principles. I am in possession of Lord Hailes's opinion in his own hand-writing, and have had it for some time. My excuse then for procrastination must be, that I wanted to have it copied, and I have now put that off so long, that it will be better to bring it

that she may trust to memory as little as possible, for memory is soon confused by a quick succession of things, and she will grow every day less confident of the truth of her own narratives, unless she can recur to some written memoirs. If she has satisfied herself with hints, instead of full representations, let her supply the deficiencies now while her memory is yet fresh, and while her father's memory may help her. If she observes this direction, she will not have travelled in vain, for she will bring home a book with which she may entertain herself to the end of life. If it were not now too late, I would advise her to note the impression which the first sight of any thing new and wonderful made upon her mind. Let her now set her thoughts down as she can recollect them, for faint as they may already be, they will grow every day fainter.

"Perhaps I do not flatter myself unreasonably when I imagine that you may wish to know something of me. I can gratify your benevolence with no account of health. The hand of time, or of disease is very heavy upon me. I pass restless and uneasy nights, harassed with convulsions of my breast, and flatulencies at my stomach, and restless nights make heavy days. But nothing will be mended by complaints, and therefore I will make an end. When we meet we will try to forget our cares and our maladies, and contribute, as we can, to the cheerfulness of each other. If I had gone with you, I believe I should have been better, but I do not know that it was in my power. I am, dear Sir,

Your most humble servant,

"Feb 3, 1778"

"SAM JOHNSON

This letter, while it gives admirable advice how to travel to the best advantage, and will therefore be of very general use, is another eminent proof of Johnson's warm and affectionate heart.

The friendship between Mr Welch and him was unbroken. Mr Welch died not many months before him, and bequeathed him five guineas for a ring, which Johnson received with tenderness, as a kind memorial. His regard was constant for his friend Mr Welch's daughters, of whom Jane is married to Mr Nollekens, the statuary, whose merit is too well known to require any praise from me.

with me than send it, as I shall probably get you to look at it sooner when I solicit you in person

"My wife, who is, I thank God, a good deal better, is much obliged to you for your very polite and courteous offer of your apartment but, if she goes to London, it will be best for her to have lodgings in the more airy vicinity of Hyde-Park I, however, doubt much if I shall be able to prevail with her to accompany me to the metropolis, for she is so different from you and me, that she dislikes travelling; and she is so anxious about her children, that she thinks she should be unhappy if at a distance from them. She therefore wishes rather to go to some country place in Scotland, where she can have them with her.

"I purpose being in London about the 20th of next month, as I think it creditable to appear in the House of Lords as one of Douglas's Counsel, in the great and last competition between Duke Hamilton and him

* * * * *

"I am sorry poor Mrs Williams is so ill: though her temper is unpleasant, she has always been polite and obliging to me. I wish many happy years to good Mr. Levett, who I suppose holds his usual place at your breakfast-table "

"I ever am, my dear Sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

To the same.

"Edinburgh, Feb 23, 1778

"MY DEAR SIR,—You are at present busy amongst the English Poets, preparing, for the publick instruction and entertainment, Prefaces, biographical and critical. It will not, therefore, be out of season to appeal to you for the decision of a controversy which has arisen between a lady and me concerning a passage in Parnell. That poet tells us, that his Hermit quitted his cell

'————— to know the world by sight,
To find if *books* or *swains* report it right,
(For yet by *swains alone* the world he knew,
Whose feet came wand'ring o'er the nightly dew).'

I maintain that there is an inconsistency here; for as the Hermit's notions of the world were formed from the reports both of *books*

"Dr Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, humorously observed, that Levett used to breakfast on the crust of a roll, which Johnson, after tearing out the crumb for himself, threw to his humble friend

and *swains*, he could not justly be said to know by *swains alone*. Be pleased to judge between us, and let us have your reasons.

"What do you say to '*Taxation no Tyranny*' now, after Lord North's declaration, or confession, or whatever else his conciliatory speech should be called? I never differed from you on politicks but upon two points—the Middlesex Election, and the Taxation of the Americans by the British *Houses of Representatives*. There is a *charm* in the world *Parliament*, so I avoid it. As I am a steady and a warm Tory, I regret that the King does not see it to be better for him to receive constitutional supplies from his American subjects by the voice of their own assemblies, where his Royal Person is represented, than through the medium of his British subjects. I am persuaded that the power of the Crown, which I wish to increase, would be greater when in contact with all its dominions, than if 'the rays of regal bounty'* were to 'shine' upon America, through that dense and troubled body—a modern British Parliament. But, enough of this subject, for your angry voice at Ashbourne upon it, still sounds awful 'in my mind's ears.' I ever am, my dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

To the same

"Edinburgh, March 12, 1778

"MY DEAR SIR,—The alarm of your late illness distressed me but for a few hours; for on the evening of the day that it reached me, I found it contradicted in 'The London Chronicle,' which I could depend upon as authentick concerning you, Mr Strahan being the printer of it. I did not see the paper in which 'the approaching extinction of a bright luminary' was announced. Sir William Forbes told me of it, and he says, he saw me so uneasy, that he did not give me the report in such strong terms as he had read it. He afterwards sent me a letter from Mr Langton to him, which relieved me much. I am, however, not quite easy, as I have not heard from you; and now I shall not have that comfort before I see you, for I set out for London to-morrow before the post comes in. I hope to be with you on Wednesday morning, and I ever am, with the highest veneration, my dear Sir,

"Your much obliged

"Faithful and affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL "

* Alluding to a line in his "*Vanity of human Wishes*," when describing Cardinal Wolsey in his state of elevation,

"Through him the rays of regal bounty shine "

On Wednesday, March 18, I arrived in London, and was informed by good Mr Francis that his master was better, and was gone to Mr. Thrale's at Streatham, to which place I wrote to him, begging to know when he would be in town. He was not expected for some time, but next day having called on Dr. Taylor, in Dean's-yard, Westminster, I found him there, and was told he had come to town for a few hours. He met me with his usual kindness, but instantly returned to the writing of something on which he was employed when I came in, and on which he seemed much intent. Finding him thus engaged, I made my visit very short, and had no more of his conversation, except his expressing a serious regret that a friend of ours was living at too much expence, considering how poor an appearance he made "If (said he) a man has splendour from his expence, if he spends his money in pride or in pleasure, he has value, but if he lets others spend it for him, which is most commonly the case, he has no advantage from it"

On Friday, March 20, I found him at his own house, sitting with Mrs Williams, and was informed that the room formerly allotted to me was now appropriated to a charitable purpose, Mrs. Desmoulins,* and I think her daughter, and a Miss Carmichael, being all lodged in it. Such was his humanity, and such his generosity, that Mrs. Desmoulins herself told me, he allowed her half-a-guinea a week. Let it be remembered, that this was above a twelfth part of his pension

His liberality, indeed, was at all periods of his life very remarkable Mr Howard, of Lichfield, at whose father's house Johnson had in his early years been kindly received, told me, that when he was a boy at the Charter House, his father wrote to him to go and pay a visit to Mr Samuel Johnson, which he accordingly did, and found him in an upper room. of poor appearance Johnson received him with much courteousness, and talked a great deal to him, as to a school boy, of the course of his education, and other particulars.¹ When he afterwards came to know and understand the high character of this great man, he recollected his condescension with wonder He added, that when he was going away, Mr Johnson presented him with half-a guinea, and this, said Mr Howard, was at a time when he probably had not another

We retired from Mrs Williams to another room Tom Davies

* Daughter of Dr Swinfen, Johnson's godfather, and widow of Mr. Desmoulins, a writing master

¹ Mr Rogers used to tell how he and a companion, when mere boys, determined to call on the doctor, and introduce themselves When they reached

his door their hearts failed them, and they ran off Mr Boswell assured him that they would have been cordially received — *Table Talk*.

soon after joined us. He had now unfortunately failed in his circumstances, and was much indebted to Dr. Johnson's kindness for obtaining for him many alleviations of his distress. After he went away, Johnson blamed his folly in quitting the stage, by which he and his wife got five hundred pounds a year. I said, I believed it was owing to Churchill's attack upon him,

"He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone."

JOHNSON. "I believe so too, Sir. But what a man is he who is to be driven from the stage by a line? Another line would have driven him from his shop."

I told him, that I was engaged as Counsel at the bar of the House of Commons to oppose a road-bill in the county of Stirling, and asked him what mode he would advise me to follow in addressing such an audience. JOHNSON "Why, Sir, you must provide yourself with a good deal of extraneous matter, which you are to produce occasionally, so as to fill up the time, for you must consider, that they do not listen much. If you begin with the strength of your cause, it may be lost before they begin to listen. When you catch a moment of attention, press the merits of the question upon them." He said, as to one point of the merits, that he thought "it would be a wrong thing to deprive the small landholders of the privilege of assessing themselves for making and repairing the high roads, *it was destroying so much liberty, without a good reason, which was always a bad thing.*" When I mentioned this observation next day to Mr. Wilkes, he pleasantly said, "What! does he talk of liberty? *Liberty* is as ridiculous in his mouth as *Religion* in mine." Mr. Wilkes's advice, as to the best mode of speaking at the bar of the House of Commons, was not more respectful towards the senate, than that of Dr. Johnson. "Be as impudent as you can, as merry as you can, and say whatever comes uppermost. Jack Lee is the best heard there of any Counsel, and he is the most impudent dog, and always abusing us."

In my interview with Dr. Johnson this evening, I was quite easy, quite as his companion, upon which I find in my Journal the following reflection. "So ready is my mind to suggest matter for dissatisfaction, that I felt a sort of regret that I was so easy. I missed that awful reverence with which I used to contemplate *Mr. Samuel Johnson*, in the complex magnitude of his literary, moral, and religious character. I have a wonderful superstitious love of *mystery*, when, perhaps, the truth is, that it is owing to the cloudy darkness of my own mind. I should be glad that I am more advanced in my progress of being, so that I can view Dr. Johnson

with a steadier and clearer eye. My dissatisfaction to-night was foolish. Would it not be foolish to regret that we shall have less mystery in a future state? That we 'now see in a glass darkly,' but shall 'then see face to face?'—This reflection, which I thus freely communicate, will be valued by the thinking part of my readers, who may have themselves experienced similar states of mind

He returned next day to Streatham, to Mr. Thrale's; where, as Mr Strahan once complained to me, "he was in a great measure absorbed from the society of his old friends." I was kept in London by business, and wrote to him on the 27th, that "a separation from him for a week, when we were so near, was equal to a separation for a year, when we were at four hundred miles distance." I went to Streatham on Monday, March 30. Before he appeared, Mrs. Thrale made a very characteristical remark:—"I do not know for certain what will please Dr. Johnson but I know for certain that it will displease him to praise any thing, even what he likes extravagantly"

At dinner he laughed at querulous declamations against the age, on account of luxury—increase of London—scarcity of provisions—and other such topicks. "Houses (said he) will be built till rents fall, and corn is more plentiful now than ever it was."

I had before dinner repeated a ridiculous story told me by an old man who had been a passenger with me in the stage-coach to-day. Mrs. Thrale, having taken occasion to allude to it in talking to me, called it "The story told you by the old *woman*."—"Now, Madam, (said I,) give me leave to catch you in the fact: it was not an old *woman*, but an old *man*, whom I mentioned as having told me this." I presumed to take an opportunity, in presence of Johnson, of shewing this lively lady how ready she was, unintentionally, to deviate from exact authenticity of narration.

"Thomas à Kempis (he observed) must be a good book, as the world has opened its arms to receive it. It is said to have been printed, in one language or other, as many times as there have been months since it first came out. I always was struck with this sentence in it 'Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.'"

He said, "I was angry with Hurd about Cowley, for having published a selection of his works but, upon better consideration, I think there is no impropriety in a man's publishing as much as he chooses of any authour, if he does not put the rest out of the way. A man, for instance, may print the Odes of Horace alone." He

seemed to be in a more indulgent humour than when this subject was discussed between him and Mr Murphy.*

When we were at tea and coffee, there came in Lord Trimblestown, in whose family was an ancient Irish peerage, but it suffered by taking the generous side in the troubles of the last century. He was a man of pleasing conversation, and was accompanied by a young gentleman, his son.

I mentioned that I had in my possession the *Life* of Sir Robert Sibbald, the celebrated Scottish antiquary, and founder of the Royal College of Physicians at Edinburgh, in the original manuscript in his own hand-writing, and that it was I believed the most natural and candid account of himself that ever was given by any man. As an instance, he tells that the Duke of Perth then Chancellor of Scotland, pressed him very much to come over to the Roman-Catholick Faith, that he resisted all his Grace's arguments for a considerable time, till one day he felt himself as it were instantaneously convinced, and with tears in his eyes ran into the Duke's arms, and embraced the ancient religion; that he continued very steady in it for some time, and accompanied his Grace to London one winter, and lived in his household; that there he found the rigid fasting prescribed by the church very severe upon him, that this disposed him to reconsider the controversy, and having then seen that he was in the wrong, he returned to Protestantism. I talked of some time or other publishing this curious life Mrs. THRALE. "I think you had as well let alone that publication. To discover such weakness exposes a man when he is gone." JOHNSON. "Nay, it is an honest picture of human nature. How often are the primary motives of our greatest actions as small as Sibbald's, for his re-conversion." Mrs THRALE. "But may they not as well be forgotten?" JOHNSON "No, Madam, a man loves to review his own mind. That is the use of a diary, or journal" LORD TRIMBLESTOWN. "True, Sir. As the ladies love to see themselves in a glass, so a man likes to see himself in his journal" BOSWELL. "A very pretty allusion" JOHNSON "Yes, indeed" BOSWELL. "And as a lady adjusts her dress before a mirror, a man adjusts his character by looking at his journal." I next year found the very same thought in Atterbury's "Sermon on Lady Cutts" "In this glass she every day dressed her mind" This is a proof of coincidence, and not of plagiarism, for I had never read that sermon before.

Next morning, while we were at breakfast, Johnson gave a very earnest recommendation of what he himself practised with the utmost conscientiousness: I mean a strict attention to truth, even

* See p 118 of this Volume

in the most minute particulars "Accustom your children (said he) constantly to this, if a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them, you do not know where deviation from truth will end" BOSWELL. "It may come to the door, and when once an account is at all varied in one circumstance, it may by degrees be varied so as to be totally different from what really happened" Our lively hostess, whose fancy was impatient of the rein, fidgeted at this, and ventured to say, "Nay, this is too much. If Mr Johnson should forbid me to drink tea I would comply, as I should feel the restraint only twice a day; but little variations in narrative must happen a thousand times a day, if one is not perpetually watching" JOHNSON "Well, Madam, and you ought to be perpetually watching It is more from carelessness about truth than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world"

In his review of Dr. Warton's "Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope," Johnson has given the following salutary caution upon this subject: "Nothing but experience could evince the frequency of false information, or enable any man to conceive that so many groundless reports should be propagated, as every man of eminence may hear of himself Some men relate what they think, as what they know; some men of confused memories and habitual inaccuracy, ascribe to one man what belongs to another, and some talk on, without thought or care. A few men are sufficient to broach falsehoods, which are afterwards innocently diffused by successive relaters"^a Had he lived to read what Sir John Hawkins and Mrs. Piozzi have related concerning himself, how much would he have found his observation illustrated¹ He was indeed, so much impressed with the prevalence of falsehood, voluntary or unintentional, that I never knew any person who upon hearing an extraordinary circumstance told, discovered more of the incredulous odour. He would say with a significant look and decisive tone, "It is not so Do not tell this again" He inculcated upon

^a Literary Magazine, 1756, p. 37

Cor et Ad—Line 34. On "again" put the following note—"The following plausible, but over-prudent counsel on this subject is given by an Italian writer, quoted by *Rheda de generatione insectarum*," with the epithet of '*divinus poeta*'

'Sempre à quel ver ch' a faccia di menzogna
Dee l'uom chiudere le labbra quanto ei puote,
Però chez senza colpa fa vergogna' "^a

¹ Mr Croker enters his protest against this aspersions on the two writers, and bears testimony, from long investigation, to the general accuracy of their state-

ments Hawkins, at least, has been treated unfairly by Mr Boswell

^a The "Italian writer" was Dante.

all his friends the importance of perpetual vigilance against the slightest degrees of falsehood, the effect of which, as Sir Joshua Reynolds observed to me, has been, that all who were of his school are distinguished for a love of truth and accuracy, which they would not have possessed in the same degree, if they had not been known to Johnson.

Talking of ghosts, he said, "It is wonderful that five thousand years have now elapsed since the creation of the world, and still it is undecided whether or not there has ever been an instance of the spirit of any person appearing after death. All argument is against it, but all belief is for it."

He said, "John Wesley's conversation is good, but he is never at leisure. He is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have out his talk, as I do."

On Friday, April 3, I dined with him in London, in a company where were present several eminent men, whom I shall not name, but distinguish their parts in the conversation by different letters¹

F. "I have been looking at this famous antique marble dog of Mr Jennings, valued at a thousand guineas, said to be Alcibiades's dog."² JOHNSON "His tail then must be docked. That was the mark of Alcibiades's dog." E "A thousand guineas! The representation of no animal whatever is worth so much. At this rate a dead dog would indeed be better than a living lion." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not the worth of the thing, but of the skill in forming it which is so highly estimated. Every thing that enlarges the sphere of human powers, that shows man he can do what he thought he could not do, is valuable. The first man who balanced a straw upon his nose, Johnston who rode upon three horses at a time, in short, all such men deserved the applause of mankind, not

¹ This, as Mr Croker shows, was a club meeting. Of the party were Johnson, Gibbon, Fordyce, Shendan, Reynolds, Lord Upper Ossory, and Boswell. It seems extraordinary that the reporter should have been so guarded on this occasion, disguising the names of the speakers under arbitrary initials, especially as in other places he has been quite unreserved in regard to members of the club. I believe the following to be the solution. Mr Boswell regularly submitted his various reports to the persons who were the subject of them, and who sometimes objected to being made responsible by name for particular statements. Burke, Miss Knight tells us,

once asked Boswell how he came to put "so many absurdities in his book," and was not likely to relish the free comments on the House of Commons, ministry, &c., which were placed to his account. He probably required that his name at least should be suppressed. "E," of course, stands for him. Boswell was, rather in awe of Burke, and hid hopes of a place through his interest. In Burke's "Correspondence" is to be found a long admiring letter from Boswell, characteristically hinting at the promised place, by saying that in *this* letter he had no intention of troubling him on *that* subject.

² Mr Jennings was in consequence, dubbed "Dog Jennings."

on account of the use of what they did, but of the dexterity which they exhibited" BOSWELL "Yet a misapplication of time and assiduity is not to be encouraged Addison, in one of his 'Spectators' commends the judgement of a King, who as a suitable reward to a man that by long perseverance had attained to the art of throwing a barley-corn through the eye of a needle, gave him a bushel of barley." JOHNSON "He has been a King of Scotland, where barley is scarce" F. "One of the most remarkable antique figures of an animal is the boar at Florence" JOHNSON. "The first boar that is well made in marble should be preserved as a wonder When men arrive at a facility of making boars well, then the workmanship is not of such value, but they should however be preserved as examples, and as a greater security for the restoration of the art, should it be lost."

E¹ "We hear prodigious complaints at present of emigration. I am convinced that emigration makes a country more populous" J "That sounds very much like a paradox." E. "Exportation of men, like exportation of all other commodities, makes more be produced" JOHNSON "But there would be more people were there not emigration, provided there were food for more" L. "No, leave a few breeders, and you'll have more people than if there were no emigration" JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, it is plain there will be more people, if there are more breeders Thirty cows in good pasture will produce more calves than ten cows, provided they have good bulls" E. "There are bulls enough in Ireland" JOHNSON (smiling,) "So, Sir, I should think from your argument" BOSWELL "You said exportation of men, like exportation of other commodities, makes more be produced. But a bounty is given to encourage the exportation of corn, and no bounty is given for the exportation of men, though, indeed, those who go gain by it." R "But the bounty on the exportation of corn is paid at home" E "That's the same thing" JOHNSON. "No, Sir." R. "A man who stays at home gains nothing by his neighbour's emigrating." BOSWELL. "I can understand that emigration may be the cause that more people may be produced in a country; but the country will not therefore be from that the more populous, for the people issue from it. It can only be said that there is a flow of people It is an encouragement to have children, to know that they can get a living by emigration." R. "Yes, if there were an emigration of children under six years of age. But they don't emigrate till they could earn their livelihood in some way at home."

¹ Burke He is later called "Mr E" this case, which shows his respect for a mark of distinction only applied in Burke

C "It is remarkable that the most unhealthy countries, where there are the most destructive diseases, such as Egypt and Bengal, are the most populous" JOHNSON. "Countries which are the most populous have the most destructive diseases. That is the true state of the proposition." C "Holland is very unhealthy, yet it is exceedingly populous." JOHNSON. "I know not that Holland is unhealthy. But its populousness is owing to an influx of people from all other countries. Disease cannot be the cause of populousness, for it not only carries off a great proportion of the people, but those who are left are weakened, and unfit for the purposes of increase."

R "Mr E I don't mean to flatter, but when posterity reads one of your speeches in parliament, it will be difficult to believe that you took so much pains, knowing with certainty that it could produce no effect, that not one vote would be gained by it." E. "Waving your compliment to me, I shall say in general, that it is very well worth while for a man to take pains to speak well in parliament. A man, who has vanity, speaks to display his talents; and if a man speaks well, he gradually establishes a certain reputation and consequence in the general opinion, which sooner or later will have its political reward. Besides, though not one vote is gained, a good speech has its effect. Though an act which has been ably opposed passes into a law, yet in its progress it is modelled, it is softened in such a manner, that we see plainly the minister has been told, that the members attached to him are so sensible of its injustice or absurdity from what they have heard, that it must be altered." JOHNSON. "And, Sir, there is a gratification of pride. Though we cannot out-vote them we will out-argue them. They shall not do wrong without its being shown both to themselves and to the world." E. "The House of Commons is a mixed body. (I except the minority, which I hold to be pure [smiling] but I take the whole House.) It is a mass by no means pure, but neither is it wholly corrupt, though there is a large proportion of corruption in it. There are many members who generally go with the minister, who will not go all lengths. There are many honest well-meaning country gentlemen who are in parliament only to keep up the consequence of their families. Upon most of these a good speech will have influence." JOHNSON. "We are all more or less governed by interest. But interest will not make us do every thing. In a case which admits of doubt, we try to think on the side which is for our interest, and generally bring ourselves to act accordingly. But the subject must admit of diversity of colouring, it must receive a colour on that side. In the House of Commons there are members enough who will not vote what is grossly unjust or absurd

No, Sir, there must always be right enough, or appearance of right, to keep wrong in countenance " BOSWELL " There is surely always a majority in parliament who have places, or who want to have them, and who therefore will be generally ready to support government without requiring any pretext." E. " True, Sir, that majority will always follow

'Quo clamor vocat et turba faventium.'"

BOSWELL. " Well now, let us take the common phrase, Place-hunters. I thought they had hunted without regard to any thing, just as their huntsman, the minister, leads, looking only to the prey " J. " But taking your metaphor, you know that in hunting there are few so desperately keen as to follow without reserve. Some do not choose to leap ditches and hedges and risk their necks, or gallop over steeps, or even to dirty themselves in bogs and mire." BOSWELL. " I am glad there are some good, quiet, moderate political hunters " E. " I believe in any body of men in England I should have been in the minority; I have always been in the minority." P. " The House of Commons resembles a private company. How seldom is any man convinced by another's argument; passion and pride rise against it." R " What would be the consequence, if a minister, sure of a majority in the House of Commons, should resolve that there should be no speaking at all upon his side." E. " He must soon go out. That has been tried, but it was found it would not do "

E " The Irish language is not primitive; it is Teutonic, a mixture of the northern tongues: it has much English in it " JOHNSON. " It may have been radically Teutonic, but English and High Dutch have no similarity to the eye, though radically the same. Once when looking into Low Dutch, I found, in a whole page, only one word similar to English; *stroem*, like *stream*, and it signified *tide* " E. " I remember having seen a Dutch Sonnet, in which I found this word, *roesnopies*. Nobody would, at first, think that this could be English, but, when we enquire, we find *roes*, rose, and *noptie*, knob; so we have *rose-buds* "

JOHNSON " I have been reading Thicknes's travels which I think are entertaining " BOSWELL. " What, Sir, a good book? " JOHNSON " Yes, Sir, to read once, I do not say you are to make a study of it, and digest it, and I believe it to be a true book in his

* Lord Bolingbroke, who, however detestable as a metaphysician, must be allowed to have had admirable talents as a political writer, thus describes the House of Commons, in his " Letter to Sir William Windham "—" You know the nature of that assembly they grow, like hounds, fond of the man who shews them game, and by whose halloo they are used to be encouraged "

intention. All travellers generally mean to tell truth, though Thickness observes, upon Smollet's account of his alarming a whole town in France by firing a blunderbuss, and frightening a French nobleman till he made him tie on his portmanteau, that he would be loth to say Smollet had told two lies in one page; but he had found the only town in France where these things could have happened Travellers must often be mistaken In every thing, except where mensuration can be applied, they may honestly differ There has been, of late, a strange turn in travellers to be displeased "

E " From the experience which I have had—and I have had a great deal—I have learnt to think better of mankind." JOHNSON " From my experience I have found them worse in commercial dealings, more disposed to cheat, than I had any notion of, but more disposed to do one another good than I had conceived " J. " Less just and more beneficent " JOHNSON " And really it is wonderful, considering how much attention is necessary for men to take care of themselves, and ward off immediate evils which press upon them, it is wonderful how much they do for others As it is said of the greatest liar, that he tells more truth than falsehood; so it may be said of the worst man, that he does more good than evil " BOSWELL " Perhaps from experience men may be found happier than we suppose." JOHNSON " No, Sir, the more we enquire we shall find men the less happy " P. " As to thinking better or worse of mankind from experience, some cunning people will not be satisfied unless they have put men to the test, as they think. There is a very good story told of Sir Godfrey Kneller, in his character of a Justice of the peace. A gentleman brought his servant before him, upon an accusation of having stolen some money from him, but it having come out that he had laid it purposely in the servant's way, in order to try his honesty, Sir Godfrey sent the master to prison." JOHNSON. " To resist temptation once, is not a sufficient proof of honesty. If a servant, indeed, were to resist the continued temptation of silver lying in a window, as some people let it lye, when he is sure his master does not know how much there is of it, he would give a strong proof of honesty. But this is a proof to which you have no right

Cor et Ad—Line 32 On "Prison" put the following note.—"Pope thus introduces this story

'Faith in such case if you should prosecute,
I think Sir Godfrey should decide the suit,
Who sent the thief who stole the cash away,
And punish'd him that put it in his way'

"Imitations of Horace, Book II. Epist. ii."

to put a man. You know, humanly speaking, there is a certain degree of temptation which will overcome any virtue. Now, in so far as you approach temptation to a man, you do him an injury; and, if he is overcome, you share his guilt." P "And, when once overcome, it is easier for him to be got the better of again" BOSWELL "Yes, you are his seducer; you have debauched him I have known a man resolve to put friendship to the test, by asking a friend to lend him money, merely with that view, when he did not want it." JOHNSON "That is very wrong, Sir Your friend may be a narrow man, and yet have many good qualities: narrowness may be his only fault Now you are trying his general character as a friend, by one particular singly, in which he happens to be defective, when, in truth, his character is composed of many particulars"

E "I understand the hogshead of claret, which this society was favoured with by our friend the Dean,¹ is nearly out, I think he should be written to, to send another of the same kind. Let the request be made with a happy ambiguity of expression, so that we may have the chance of his sending *it* also a present" JOHNSON "I am willing to offer my services as secretary on this occasion" P "As many as are for Dr. Johnson being secretary hold up your hands — Carried unanimously." BOSWELL "He will be our Dictator" JOHNSON. "No, the company is to dictate to me I am only to write for wine; and I am quite disinterested, as I drink none, I shall not be suspected of having forged the application I am no more than humble scribe" E "Then you shall prescribe." BOSWELL "Very well. The first play of words to-day" J. "No, no, the bulls in Ireland" JOHNSON "Were I your Dictator you should have no wine It would be my business *cavere ne quid detrimenti Respublica caperet*, and wine is dangerous Rome was ruined by luxury," (smiling). E. "If you allow no wine as Dictator, you shall not have me for your master of horse"

On Saturday, April 4, I drank tea with Johnson at Dr Taylor's, where he had dined. He entertained us with an account of a tragedy written by a Dr Kennedy, (not the Lisbon physician). "The catastrophe of it (said he) was, that a King, who was jealous of his Queen with his prime-minister, castrated himself. This

Cor et Ad—Line 37 On "himself" put the following note—"The reverse of the story of *Comabrus*, on which Mr David Hume told Lord Macartney, that a friend of his had written a tragedy It is, however, possible, that I may have been inaccurate in my perception of what Dr Johnson related, and that he may have been talking of the same ludicrous tragical subject that Mr Hume had mentioned"

¹ Dr Barnard Dean of Derry.

tragedy was actually shewn about in manuscript to several people, and, amongst others, to Mr Fitzherbert, who repeated to me two lines of the Prologue :

' Our hero's fate we have but gently touch'd ,
The fair might blame us if it were less couch'd.'

It is hardly to be believed what absurd and indecent images men will introduce into their writings, without being sensible of the absurdity and indecency. I remember Lord Orrery told me, that there was a pamphlet written against Sir Robert Walpole, the whole of which was an allegory on the PHALLICK OBSCENITY. The Duchess of Buckingham asked Lord Orrery *who* this person was ? He answered, he did not know. She said, she would send to Mr. Pulteney, who, she supposed, could inform her. So then, to prevent her from making herself ridiculous, Lord Orrery sent her Grace a note, in which he gave her to understand what was meant "

He was very silent this evening, and read in a variety of books ; suddenly throwing down one, and taking up another

He talked of going to Streatham that night TAYLOR "You'll be robbed if you do, or you must shoot a highwayman. Now I would rather be robbed than do that. I would not shoot a highwayman." JOHNSON "But I would rather shoot him in the instant when he is attempting to rob me, than afterwards swear against him at the Old-Bailey to take away his life, after he has robbed me. I am surer I am right in the one case than in the other. I may be mistaken as to the man when I swear. I cannot be mistaken if I shoot him in the act. Besides, we feel less reluctance to take away a man's life when we are heated by the injury, than to do it at a distance of time by an oath, after we have cooled." BOSWELL "So, Sir, you would rather act from the motive of private passion, than that of public advantage" JOHNSON "Nay, Sir, when I shoot the highwayman I act from both." BOSWELL "Very well, very well.—There is no catching him" JOHNSON "At the same time one does not know what to say For perhaps one may, a year after, hang himself from uneasiness for having shot a man." Few

* The late Duke of Montrose was generally said to have been uneasy on that account, but I can contradict the report from his Grace's own authority As he used to admit me to very easy conversation with him, I took the liberty to introduce the subject His Grace told me, that when riding one night near London, he was attacked by two highwaymen on horseback, and that he instantly shot one of them, upon which the other galloped off, that his servant, who was very well mounted, proposed to pursue him and take him, but that his Grace said, "No, we have had blood enough I hope the man may live to repent" His Grace, upon my presuming to put the question, assured me, that his mind was not [at] all clouded by what he had thus done in self-defence.

minds are fit to be trusted with so great a thing." BOSWELL. "Then, Sir, you would not shoot him?" JOHNSON. "But I might be vexed afterwards for that too"

Thrale's carriage not having come for him, as he expected, I accompanied him some part of the way home to his own house I told him, that I had talked of him to Mr. Dunning a few days before, and had said, that in his company we did not so much interchange conversation, as listen to him, and that Dunning observed, upon this, "One is always willing to listen to Dr. Johnson." to which I answered, "That is a great deal from you, Sir."—"Yes, Sir, (said Johnson,) a great deal indeed Here is a man willing to listen, to whom the world is listening all the rest of the year" BOSWELL. "I think, Sir, it is right to tell one man of such a handsome thing, which has been said of him by another. It tends to increase benevolence" JOHNSON "Undoubtedly it is right, Sir."

On Tuesday, April 7, I breakfasted with him at his house He said, "nobody was content" I mentioned to him a respectable person in Scotland¹ whom he knew, and I asserted, that I really believed he was always content. JOHNSON "No, Sir, he is not content with the present, he has always some new scheme, some new plantation, something which is future. You know he was not content as a widower, for he married again" BOSWELL. "But he is not restless" JOHNSON "Sir, he is only locally at rest A chymist is locally at rest, but his mind is hard at work. This gentleman has done with external exertions It is too late for him to engage in distant projects." BOSWELL. "He seems to amuse himself quite well, to have his attention fixed, and his tranquillity preserved by very small matters I have tried this, but it would not do with me." JOHNSON (laughing) "No, Sir, it must be born with a man to be contented to take up with little things Women have a great advantage that they may take up with little things, without disgracing themselves: a man cannot, except with fiddling. Had I learnt to fiddle, I should have done nothing else" BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, did you ever play on any musical instrument?" JOHNSON "No, Sir I once bought me a flagelet; but I never made out a tune." BOSWELL. "A flagelet, Sir!—so small an instrument?" I should have liked to hear you play on the violncello *That* should have been *your* instrument." JOHNSON. "Sir, I might as well have

^{*} When I told this to Miss Seward, she smiled, and repeated, with admirable readiness, from "Acis and Galatea,"

"Bring me a hundred reeds of ample growth,
To make a pipe for my CAPACIOUS MOUTH"

¹ No doubt Boswell's father.

played on the violincello as another, but I should have done nothing else. No, Sir, a man would never undertake great things could he be amused with small. I once tried knotting. Dempster's sister undertook to teach me; but I could not learn it." BOSWELL. "So, Sir, it will be related in pompous narrative, 'Once for his amusement he tried knotting; nor did this Hercules disdain the distaff. Once for his amusement he tried knotting.'" JOHNSON. "Knitting of stockings is a good amusement. As a freeman of Aberdeen I should be a knitter of stockings."

He asked me to go down with him and dine at Mr. Thrale's at Streatham, to which I agreed. I had lent him "An Account of Scotland, in 1702," written by a man of various enquiry, an English chaplain to a regiment stationed there. JOHNSON. "It is sad stuff, Sir, miserably written, as books in general then were. There is now an elegance of style universally diffused. No man now writes so ill as Martin's Account of the Hebrides is written. A man could not write so ill, if he should try. Set a merchant's clerk now to write, and he'll do better."

He talked to me with serious concern of a certain female friend's¹ "laxity of narration, and inattention to truth"—"I am as much vexed (said he) at the ease with which she hears it mentioned to her, as at the thing itself. I told her, 'Madam, you are contented to hear every day said to you, what the highest of mankind have died for, rather than bear'—You know, Sir, the highest of mankind have died rather than bear to be told they had uttered a falsehood. Do talk to her of it. I am weary."

BOSWELL. "Was not Dr. John Campbell a very inaccurate man in his narrative, Sir?" He once told me that he drank thirteen bottles of port at a sitting." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I do not know that Campbell ever lied with pen and ink, but you could not entirely depend on any thing he told you in conversation, if there was fact

Cor et Ad—Line 29 On "sitting" put the following note—"Lord Macartney observes upon this passage, 'I have heard him tell many things, which, though embellished by their mode of narrative, had their foundation in truth, but I never remember any thing approaching to this. If he had written it, I should have supposed some wag had put the figure of one before the three'—I am, however, absolutely certain that Dr. Campbell told me it, and I gave particular attention to it, being myself a lover of wine, and therefore curious to hear whatever is remarkable concerning drinking. There can be no doubt that some men can drink, without suffering any injury, such a quantity as to others appears incredible. It is but fair to add, that Dr. Campbell told me, he took a very long time to this great potation, and I have heard Dr. Johnson say, 'Sir, if a man drinks very slowly, and lets one glass evaporate before he takes another, I know not how long he may drink.' Dr. Campbell mentioned a Colonel of Militia who sat with him all the time, and drank equally."

¹ No doubt Mrs. Piozzi

mixed with it. However, I loved Campbell: he was a solid orthodox man, he had a reverence for religion. Though defective in practice, he was religious in principle; and he did nothing grossly wrong that I have heard."

I told him, that I had been present the day before when Mrs. Montagu, the literary lady, sat to Miss Reynolds for her picture, and that she said, "she had bound up Mr. Gibbon's History without the last two offensive chapters, for that she thought the book so far good, as it gave, in an elegant manner, the substance of the bad writers *mediæ ævi*, which the late Lord Lyttelton advised her to read." JOHNSON. "Sir, she has not read them: she shews none of this impetuosity to me: she does not know Greek, and, I fancy, knows little Latin. She is willing you should think she knows them, but she does not say she does." BOSWELL. "Mr. Harris, who was present, agreed with her." JOHNSON. "Harris was laughing at her, Sir. Harris is a sound sullen scholar, he does not like interlopers. Harris, however, is a prig, and a bad prig," I looked into his book, and thought he did not understand his own system." BOSWELL. "He says plain things in a formal and abstract way, to be sure, but his method is good: for to have clear notions upon any subject we must have recourse to analytick arrangement." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is what every body does, whether they will or no. But sometimes things may be made darker by definition. I see a *cow* I define her, *Animal quadrupes ruminans cornutum*. But a goat ruminates, and a cow may have no horns. *Cow* is plainer." BOSWELL. "I think Dr. Franklin's definition of *Man* is a good one — 'A tool making animal'." JOHNSON. "But many a man never made a tool: and suppose a man without arms, he could not make a tool."

Talking of drinking wine, he said, "I did not leave off wine because I could not bear it. I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it. University College has witnessed this." BOSWELL. "Why, then, Sir, did you leave it off?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, because it is so much better for a man to be sure that he is never to be intoxicated, never to lose the power over

* What my friend meant by these words concerning the amiable philosopher of Salisbury, I am at a loss to understand.

Third Edition.—Add to note, "A friend suggests that Johnson thought his manner as a writer affected, while at the same time, the matter did not compensate for the fault. In short, that he meant to make a remark quite different from that which a celebrated gentleman made on a very eminent physician. He is a coxcomb, but a satisfactory coxcomb." 1

1 This addition is either one of Boswell's notes for his third edition, or of

Milnes's composition. The "celebrated gentleman" was Gerard Hamilton.

himself. I shall not begin to drink wine again till I grow old, and want it." BOSWELL. "I think, Sir, you once said to me, that not to drink wine was a great deduction from life." JOHNSON. "It is a diminution of pleasure, to be sure, but I do not say a diminution of happiness. There is more happiness in being rational" BOSWELL. "But if we could have pleasure always, should not we be happy?" The greatest part of men would compound for pleasure." JOHNSON. "Supposing we could have pleasure always, an intellectual man would not compound for it. The greatest part of men would compound, because the greatest part of men are gross." BOSWELL. "I allow there may be greater pleasure than from wine. I have had more pleasure from your conversation. I have indeed; I assure you I have" JOHNSON. "When we talk of pleasure, we mean sensual pleasure. When a man says he had pleasure with a woman, he does not mean conversation, but something of a very different nature. Philosophers tell you, that pleasure is *contrary* to happiness. Gross men prefer animal pleasure. So there are men who have preferred living among savages. Now what a wretch must he be, who is content with such conversation as can be had among savages! You may remember an officer at Fort Augustus, who had served in America, told us of a woman whom they were obliged to *bind*, in order to get her back from savage life" BOSWELL. "She must have been an animal, a beast." JOHNSON. "Sir, she was a speaking cat."

I mentioned to him that I had become very weary in a company where I heard not a single intellectual sentence, except that "a man who had been settled ten years in Minorca was become a much inferior man to what he was in London, because a man's mind grows narrow in a narrow place" JOHNSON. "A man's mind grows narrow in a narrow place, whose mind is enlarged only because he has lived in a large place: but what is got by books and thinking is preserved in a narrow place as well as in a large place. A man cannot know modes of life as well in Minorca as in London, but he may study mathematicks as well in Minorca" BOSWELL. "I don't know, Sir: if you had remained ten years in the Isle of Col, you would not have been the man that you now are" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, if I had been there from fifteen to twenty-five, but not if from twenty-five to thirty-five." BOSWELL. "I own, Sir, the spirits which I have in London make me do every thing with more readiness and vigour. I can talk twice as much in London as any where else"

Of Goldsmith he said, "He was not an agreeable companion, for

* See p 217 of this Volume

he talked always for fame. A man who does so never can be pleasing. The man who talks to unburthen his mind is the man to delight you. An eminent friend of ours is not so agreeable as the variety of his knowledge would otherwise make him, because he talks partly from ostentation."

Soon after our arrival at Thrale's, I heard one of the maids calling eagerly on another, to go to Dr. Johnson. I wondered what this could mean. I afterwards learnt, that it was to give her a Bible which he had brought from London as a present to her.

He was for a considerable time occupied in reading "*Memoires de Fontenelle*;" leaning and swinging upon the low gate into the court, without his hat.

I looked into Lord Kames's "Sketches of the History of Man," and mentioned to Dr. Johnson his censure of Charles the Fifth, for celebrating his funeral obsequies in his life-time, which, I told him, I had been used to think a solemn and affecting act. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, a man may dispose his mind to think so of that act of Charles, but it is so liable to ridicule, that if one man out of ten thousand laughs at it, he'll make the other nine thousand nine hundred and ninety nine laugh too." I could not agree with him in this.

Sir John Pringle had expressed a wish that I would ask Dr. Johnson's opinion what were the best English sermons for style. I took an opportunity to day of mentioning several to him. *Atterbury*! JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, one of the best." BOSWELL. "*Tillotson*!" JOHNSON. "Why not now. I should not advise a preacher at this day to imitate Tillotson's style: though I don't know, I should be cautious of objecting to what has been applauded by so many suffrages—*South* is one of the best, if you except his peculiarities, and his violence, and sometimes coarseness of language—*Seed* has a very fine style, but he is not very theological.—*Fortin*'s sermons are very elegant—*Sherlock*'s style too is very elegant, though he has not made it his principal study—And you may add *Smallridge*. All the latter preachers have a good style. Indeed, nobody now talks much of style: Every body composes pretty well. There are no such unharmonious periods as there were a hundred years ago. I should recommend Dr. *Clarke*'s sermons, were he orthodox. However, it is very well known *where* he was not orthodox, which was upon the doctrine of the Trinity, as to which he is a condemned heretick; so one is aware of it." BOSWELL. "I like *Ogden*'s sermons on prayer very much, both for neatness of style and subtilty of reasoning." JOHNSON. "I should like to read all

that Ogden has written " BOSWELL. "What I wish to know is, what sermons afford the best specimen of English pulpit eloquence" JOHNSON. "We have no sermons addressed to the passions that are good for any thing, if you mean that kind of eloquence." A CLERGYMAN. (whose name I do not recollect) "Were not Dodd's sermons addressed to the passions?" JOHNSON. "They were nothing, Sir, be they addressed to what they may "

At dinner, Mrs Thrale expressed a wish to go and see Scotland. JOHNSON "Seeing Scotland, Madam, is only seeing a worse England. It is seeing the flower gradually fade away to the naked stalk. Seeing the Hebrides, indeed, is seeing quite a different scene."

Our poor friend, Mr. Thomas Davies, was soon to have a benefit at Drury-lane theatre,¹ as some relief to his unfortunate circumstances. We were all warmly interested for his success, and had contributed to it. However, we thought there was no harm in having our joke when he could not be hurt by it. I proposed that he should be brought on to speak a Prologue upon the occasion; and I began to mutter fragments of what it might be: as, that when now grown *old*, he was obliged to cry, "Poor Tom's *a-cold*;"—that he owned he had been driven from the stage by a Churchill, but that this was no disgrace, for a Churchill had beat the French,—that he had been satyrised as "mouthing a sentence as curs mouth a bone," but he was now glad of a bone to pick.—"Nay, (said Johnson,) I would have him to say,

'Mad Tom is come to see the world again.'

He and I returned to town in the evening. Upon the road I endeavoured to maintain, in argument, that a landed gentleman is not under any obligation to reside upon his estate, and that by living in London he does no injury to his country. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, he does no injury to his country in general, because the money which he draws from it gets back again in circulation, but to his particular district, his particular parish, he does an injury. All that he has to give away is not given to those who have the first claim to it. And though I have said that the money circulates back, it is a long time before that happens. Then, Sir, a man of family and estate ought to consider himself as having the charge of a district, over which he is to diffuse civility and happiness "

¹ Obtained for him by Johnson from the manager, Sheridan.

Next day I found him at home in the forenoon. He praised Delaney's "Observations on Swift;" said that his book and Lord Orrery's might both be true, though one viewed Swift more, and the other less favourably, and that, between both, we might have a complete notion of Swift

Talking of a man's resolving to deny himself the use of wine, from moral and religious considerations, he said, "He must not doubt about it. When one doubts as to pleasure, we know what will be the conclusion. I now no more think of drinking wine, than a horse does. The wine upon the table is no more for me, than for the dog that is under the table."

On Thursday, April 9, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, with the Bishop of St. Asaph, (Dr Shipley,) Mr. Allan Ramsay, Mr. Gibbon, Mr. Cambridge, and Mr. Langton. Mr. Ramsay had lately returned from Italy, and entertained us with his observations upon Horace's villa, which he had examined with great care. I relished this much, as it brought fresh into my mind what I had viewed with great pleasure thirteen years before. The Bishop, Dr. Johnson, and Mr Cambridge, joined with Mr Ramsay, in recollecting the various lines in Horace relating to the subject.

Horace's journey to Brundisium being mentioned, Johnson observed that the brook which he describes is to be seen now, exactly as at that time, and that he had often wondered how it happened, that small brooks, such as this, kept the same situation for ages, notwithstanding earthquakes, by which even mountains have been changed, and agriculture, which produces such a variation upon the surface of the earth. CAMBRIDGE "A Spanish writer has this thought in a poetical conceit. After observing that most of the solid structures of Rome are totally perished, while the Tiber remains the same, he adds,

*'Lo que era Firme huró i solamente,
Lo Fugitivo permanece i dura.'*"

JOHNSON. "Sir, that is taken from *Janus Vitalis*:

*'————— immota labescunt;
Et quæ perpetuè sunt agitata manent.'*"

The Bishop said, it appeared from Horace's writings that he was a cheerful contented man. JOHNSON "We have no reason to believe that, my Lord. Are we to think Pope was happy,

because he says so in his writings? We see in his writings what he wished the state of his mind to appear. Dr. Young, who pined for preferment, talks with contempt of it in his writings, and affects to despise every thing that he did not despise." BISHOP OF ST ASAPH "He was like other chaplains, looking for vacancies: but that is not peculiar to the clergy. I remember when I was with the army, after the battle of Lafeldt, the officers seriously grumbled that no General was killed." CAMBRIDGE "We may believe Horace when he says,

'Romæ Tibur amem ventosus Tibure Romanum'"

BOSWELL "How hard is it that man can never be at rest"
RAMSAY "It is not in his nature to be at rest. When he is at rest he is in the worst state that he can be in, for he has nothing to agitate him. He is then like the man in the Irish song,

'There was an old fellow at Ballanacrazy,
Who wanted a wife for to make him uneasy'

Goldsmith being mentioned, Johnson observed that it was long before his merit came to be acknowledged. That he once complained to him, in ludicrous terms of distress, "Whenever I write anything the publick *make a point* to know nothing about it:" but that his "Traveller" brought him into high reputation. LANGTON. "There is not one bad line in that poem, not one of Dryden's careless verses" SIR JOSHUA. "I was glad to hear Charles Fox say it was one of the finest poems in the English language." LANGTON. "Why was you glad? You surely had no doubt of this before." JOHNSON "No, the merit of 'The Traveller' is so well established, that Mr Fox's praise cannot augment it, nor his censure diminish it." SIR JOSHUA. "But his friends may suspect they had a too great partiality for him" JOHNSON "Nay, Sir, the partiality of his friends was all against him. It was with difficulty we could give him a hearing. Goldsmith had no settled notions upon any subject, so he talked always at random. It seemed to be his intention to blurt out whatever was in his mind, and see what would become of it. He was angry too when caught in an absurdity, but it did not prevent him from falling into another the next minute. I re-

Cor. et Ad—After line 10, *read*,—"than when he boasts of his consistency:

*'Me constare mihi scis, et decedere tristem,
Quandoque trahunt inuasa negotia Romam'*"

Ibid—Line 16 For "was an old fellow at Ballanacrazy," *read* "lived a young man in Ballanacrazy"

member Chamier, after talking with him for some time, said, 'Well, I do believe he wrote this poem himself and, let me tell you, that is believing a great deal' Chamier once asked him what he meant by *slow*, the last word in the first line of 'The Traveller,'

'Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow.'

Did he mean tardiness of locomotion? Goldsmith, who would say something without consideration, answered, 'Yes.' I was sitting by, and said, 'No, Sir, you do not mean tardiness of locomotion; you mean, that sluggishness of mind which comes upon a man in solitude.' Chamier believed then that I had written the line, as much as if he had seen me write it Goldsmith, however, was a man, who, whatever he wrote, did it better than any other man could do He deserved a place in Westminster-Abbey, and every year he lived, would have deserved it better He had, indeed, been at no pains to fill his mind with knowledge. He transplanted it from one place to another, and it did not settle in his mind; so he could not tell what was in his own books"

We talked of living in the country. JOHNSON. "No wise man will go to live in the country, unless he has something to do which can be better done in the country. For instance: if he is to shut himself up for a year to study a science, it is better to look out to the fields, than to an opposite wall Then, if a man walks out in the country, there is nobody to keep him from walking in again - but if a man walks out in London, he is not sure when he shall walk in again A great city is, to be sure, the school for studying life, and 'The proper study of mankind is man,' as Pope observes." BOSWELL. "I fancy London is the best place in the world for society, though I have heard that the very first society of Paris is still beyond any thing that we have here" JOHNSON. "Sir, I question if in Paris such a company as is sitting round this table could be got together in less than half a year. They talk in France of the felicity of men and women living together - the truth is, that there the men are not higher than the women, they know no more than women do, and they are not held down in their conversation by the presence of women" RAMSAY. "Literature is upon the growth, it is in its spring in France. Here it is rather *passée*" JOHNSON. "Literature was in France long before we had it. Paris was the second city for the revival of letters Italy had it first, to be sure What have we done for literature, equal to what was done by the Stephani and others in France.

Our literature came to us through France. Caxton printed only two books, Chaucer and Gower, that were not translations from the French, and Chaucer, we know, took much from the Italians. No, Sir, if literature be in its spring in France, it is a second spring, it is after a winter. We are now before the French in literature, but we had it long after them. In England, any man who wears a sword and a powdered wig is ashamed to be illiterate. I believe it is not so in France. Yet there is, probably, a great deal of learning in France, because they have such a number of religious establishments; so many men who have nothing else to do but to study. I do not know this; but I take it upon the common principles of chance. Where there are many shooters, some will hit."

We talked of old age. Johnson (now in his seventieth year) said, "It is a man's own fault, it is from want of use, if his mind grows torpid in old age." The Bishop asked, if an old man does not lose faster than he gets. JOHNSON. "I think not, my Lord, if he exerts himself." One of the company rashly observed, that he thought it was happy for an old man that insensibility comes upon him. JOHNSON. (with a noble elevation and disdain) "No, Sir, I should never be happy by being less rational." BISHOP OF ST ASAPH. "Your wish then, Sir, is *γερασκειν διδασκομενος*." JOHNSON. "Yes, my Lord."

His Lordship mentioned a charitable establishment in Wales, where people were maintained, and supplied with every thing, upon the condition of their contributing the weekly produce of their labour; and he said, they grew quite torpid for want of property. JOHNSON. "They have no object for hope. Their condition cannot be better. It is rowing without a port."

One of the company asked him the meaning of the expression in Juvenal, *unius lacertæ*. JOHNSON. "I think it clear enough, as much ground as one may have a chance to find a lizard upon."

Commentators have differed as to the exact meaning of the expression by which the Poet intended to enforce the sentiment contained in the passage where these words occur. It is enough that they mean to denote even a very small possession, provided it be a man's own.

*"Est aliquid quocunque loco quocunque recessu,
Unius sese dominum fecisse lacertæ."*

This season there was a whimsical fashion in the newspapers of applying Shakspeare's words to describe living people well known in the world; which was done under the title of "*Modern Characters from Shakspeare*;" many of which were admirably adapted.

The fancy took so much, that they were afterwards collected into a pamphlet. Somebody said to Johnson, across the table, that he had not been in those characters "Yes (said he) I have. I should have been sorry to be left out" He then repeated what had been applied to him,

"I must borrow GARAGANTUA's mouth."

Miss Reynolds not perceiving at once the meaning of this, he was obliged to explain it to her, which had something of an awkward and ludicrous effect. "Why, Madam, it has a reference to me as using big words, which require the mouth of a giant to pronounce them Garagantua is the name of a giant in Rabelais." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, there is another amongst them for you :

'He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
Or Jove for his power to thunder.'"

JOHNSON "There is nothing marked in that. No, Sir, Garagantua is the best" Notwithstanding this ease and good humour, when I, a little while afterwards, repeated his sarcasm on Kenrick,^a which was received with applause, he asked, "*Who* said that?" and on my suddenly answering, *Garagantua*, he looked serious, which was a sufficient indication that he did not wish it to be kept up.

When we went to the drawing room there was a rich assemblage. Besides the company who had been at dinner, there were Mr. Garrick, Mr. Harris of Salisbury, Dr. Percy, Dr. Burney, Honourable Mrs. Cholmondeley,¹ Miss Hannah More, &c. &c.

After wandering about in a kind of pleasing distraction for some time, I got into a corner, with Johnson, Garrick, and Harris. GARRICK. (to Harris) "Pray, Sir, have you read Potter's *Æschylus*?" HARRIS "Yes; and think it pretty." GARRICK. (to Johnson) "And what think you, Sir, of it?" JOHNSON. "I thought what I read of it *verbiage* but upon Mr. Harris's recommendation I will read a play (To Mr. Harris) Don't prescribe two." Mr. Harris suggested one, I do not remember which. JOHNSON. "We must try its effect as an English poem, that is the way to judge of the merit of a translation. Translations are, in general, for people who cannot read the original." I mentioned the vulgar saying, that Pope's Homer was not a good representation of the original. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is the greatest work of the kind that has ever been produced." BOSWELL. "The truth is, it is impossible perfectly to translate poetry In a different language it may be the

^a See p. 306 of Vol. I.

¹ Sister of "Peg" Woffington.

same tune, but it has not the same tone Homer plays it on a bassoon, Pope on a flagelet." HARRIS. "I think heroick poetry is best in blank verse; yet it appears that rhyme is essential to English poetry, from our deficiency in metrical quantities In my opinion, the chief excellence of our language is numerous prose" JOHNSON "Sir William Temple was the first writer who gave cadence to English prose. Before his time they were careless of arrangement, and did not mind whether a sentence ended with an important word or an insignificant word, or with what part of speech it was concluded" Mr Langton, who now had joined us, commended Clarendon JOHNSON. "He is objected to for his parentheses, his involved clauses, and his want of harmony. But he is supported by his matter. It is, indeed, owing to a plethora of matter that his style is so faulty Every *substance* (smiling to Mr. Harris) has so many *accidents*.—To be distinct, we must talk *analytically*. If we analyse language, we must speak of it grammatically: if we analyse argument, we must speak of it logically." GARRICK. "Of all the translations that ever were attempted, I think Elphinston's *Martial* the most extraordinary. He consulted me upon it, who am a little of an epigrammatist myself you know. I told him freely, 'You don't seem to have that turn' I asked him if he was serious; and finding he was, I advised him against publishing. Why his translation is more difficult to understand than the original I thought him a man of some talents; but he seems crazy in this" JOHNSON. "Sir, you have done what I had not courage to do. But he did not ask my advice, and I did not force it upon him to make him angry with me." GARRICK "But as a friend, Sir—" JOHNSON. "Why such a friend as I am with him—no." GARRICK. "But if you see a friend going to tumble over a precipice?" JOHNSON "That is an extravagant case, Sir. You are sure a friend will thank you for hindering him from tumbling over a precipice but, in the other case, I should hurt his vanity, and do him no good. He would not take my advice. His brother-in-law, Strahan, sent him a subscription of fifty pounds, and said he would send him fifty more, if he would not publish" GARRICK "What! eh! is Strahan a good judge of an Epigram? Is not he rather an *obtuse* man, eh?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, he may not be a judge of an Epigram but you see he is a judge of what is *not* an Epigram." BOSWELL. "It is easy for you, Mr. Garrick, to talk to an authour as you talked to Elphinston you, who have been so long the manager of a theatre, rejecting the plays of poor authours. You are an old Judge, who have often pronounced sentence of death. You are a practised surgeon, who have often amputated limbs; and though

this may have been for the good of your patients, they cannot like you. Those who have undergone a dreadful operation are not very fond of seeing the operator again." GARRICK. "Yes, I know enough of that. There was a reverend gentleman (Mr. Hawkins) who wrote a tragedy, the siege of something, which I refused." HARRIS "So the siege was raised." JOHNSON. "Aye, he came to me and complained, and told me, that Garrick said his play was wrong in the *concoction*. Now, what is the concoction of a play?" (Here Garrick started, and twisted himself, and seemed sorely vexed, for Johnson told me he believed the story was true.) GARRICK. "I—I—I—said *first* concoction" JOHNSON (smiling) "Well, he left out *first*. And Rich, he said, refused him *in false English*: he could shew it under his hand." GARRICK. "He wrote to me in violent wrath for having refused his play: 'Sir, this is growing a very serious and terrible affair. I am resolved to publish my play I will appeal to the world, and how will your judgement appear?' I answered, 'Sir, notwithstanding all the seriousness, and all the terrors, I have no objection to your publishing your play, and as you live at a great distance, (Devonshire, I believe,) if you will send me it, I will convey it to the press' I never heard more of it, ha! ha! ha!"

On Friday, April 10, I found Johnson at home in the forenoon. We resumed the conversation of yesterday. He put me in mind of some of it which had escaped my memory, and enabled me to record it more perfectly than I otherwise could have done. He was much pleased with my paying so great attention to his recommendation in 1763, the beginning of our acquaintance, to keep a journal, and I could perceive he was secretly pleased to find so much of the fruit of his mind preserved; and as he had been used to imagine and say that he always laboured when he said a good thing—it delighted

Cor et Ad—Line 5 On "something" put the following note—"It was called 'The Siege of Aleppo' Mr Hawkins, the Author of it, was formerly Professor of Poetry at Oxford. It is printed in his 'Miscellanies,' 3 Vols 8vo."¹

¹ This forms one of the most amusing of the many amusing controversies to be found in the "Garrick Correspondence." The play, the author states, was "honoured with the *infræ* approbation of Johnson." His other piece, "Alfred," also received approval from the same source. Garrick, according to a letter of Mr Hawkins, was right in his recollection of having used the words "*first* concoction" ("Gar Cor," v. h.

p. 6), though he rather coloured his account of what followed. To the threat of publishing, Garrick replied, "If you will publish your plays with your appeal, I will forgive you the rest." But he did not offer to convey it to the press. Mr Garrick had before made a mistake as to the address of the letter, which he directed to Devonshire instead of to Dorset.

him, on a review, to find that his conversation teemed with point and imagery

I said to him, "You were yesterday, Sir, in remarkably good humour. but there was nothing to offend you, nothing to produce irritation or violence. There was no bold offender. There was not one capital conviction It was a maiden assize You had on your white gloves "

He found fault with our friend Langton for having been too silent. "Sir, (said I,) you will recollect, that he very properly took up Sir Joshua for being glad that Charles Fox had praised Goldsmith's 'Traveller,' and you joined him " JOHNSON "Yes, Sir, I knocked Fox on the head, without ceremony Reynolds is too much under Fox and Burke at present. He is under the *Fox star* and the *Irish constellation*. He is always under some planet." BOSWELL "There is no Fox star " JOHNSON. "But there is a dog star " BOSWELL "They say, indeed, a fox and a dog are the same animal "

I reminded him of a gentleman who, Mrs. Cholmondeley said, was first talkative from affectation, and then silent from the same cause, that he first thought, "I shall be celebrated as the liveliest man in every company;" and then, all at once, "O! it is much more respectable to be grave and look wise." "He has reversed the Pythagorean discipline, by being first talkative, and then silent. He reverses the course of Nature too he was first the gay butterfly, and then the creeping worm " Johnson laughed loud and long at this expansion and illustration of what he himself had told me.

We dined together with Mr Scott (now Sir William Scott, his Majesty's Advocate) at his chambers in the Temple, nobody else there. The company being small, Johnson was not in such spirits as he had been yesterday, and for a considerable time little was said. At last he burst forth, "Subordination is sadly broken down in this age. No man, now, has the same authority which his father had—except a gaoler. No master has it over his servants. it is diminished in our colleges; nay, in our grammar-schools " BOSWELL. "What is the cause of this, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why the coming in of the Scotch." (laughing sarcastically) BOSWELL. "That is to say, things have been turned topsy turvey—But your serious cause " JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, there are many causes, the chief of which is, I think, the great increase of money. No man now depends upon the Lord of a Manour, when he can send to another country, and fetch provisions The shoe-black at the entry of my court does not depend on me. I can deprive him but of a penny a day, which he hopes somebody else will bring him, and that penny I must carry to another shoe-black, so the trade suffers

nothing. I have explained in my 'Journey to the Hebrides,' how gold and silver destroy feudal subordination. But, besides, there is a general relaxation of reverence. No son now depends upon his father as in former times. Paternity used to be considered as of itself a great thing, which had a right to many claims. That is, in general, reduced to very small bounds. My hope is, that as anarchy produces tyranny, this extreme relaxation will produce *frens strictio*."

Talking of fame, for which there is so great a desire, I observed how little there is of it in reality, compared with the other objects of human attention. "Let every man recollect, and he will be sensible how small a part of his time is employed in talking or thinking of Shakspeare, Voltaire, or any of the most celebrated men that have ever lived, or are now supposed to occupy the attention and admiration of the world. Let this be extracted and compressed, into what a narrow space will it go!" I then shily introduced Mr Garrick's fame, and his assuming the airs of a great man. JOHNSON "Sir, it is wonderful how *little* Garrick assumes. No, Sir, Garrick *fortunam reverenter habet*. Consider, Sir celebrated men, such as you have mentioned, have had their applause at a distance, but Garrick had it dashed in his face, sounded in his ears, and went home every night with the plaudits of a thousand in his *cranium*. Then, Sir, Garrick did not *find*, but *mads* his way to the tables, the levees, and almost the bed-chambers, of the great. Then, Sir, Garrick had under him a numerous body of people, who, from fear of his power, and hopes of his favour, and admiration of his talents, were constantly submissive to him. And here is a man who has advanced the dignity of his profession. Garrick has made a player a higher character." SCOTT. "And he is a very sprightly writer too." JOHNSON "Yes, Sir; and all this supported by great wealth of his own acquisition. If all this had happened to me, I should have had a couple of fellows with long poles walking before me, to knock down every body that stood in the way. Consider, if all this had happened to Cibber or Quin, they'd have jumped over the moon. —Yet Garrick speaks to us" (smiling). BOSWELL "And Garrick is a very good man, a charitable man." JOHNSON. "Sir, a liberal man. He has given away more money than any man in England. There may be a little vanity mixed: but he has shewn, that money is not his first object." BOSWELL. "Yet Foote used to say of him, that he walked out with an intention to do a generous action, but, turning the corner of a street, he met with the ghost of a halfpenny, which frightened him." JOHNSON "Why, Sir, that is very true, too, for I never knew a man of whom it could be said with less

certainty to-day, what he will do to-morrow, than Garrick; it depends so much on his humour at the time" SCOTT. "I am glad to hear of his liberality. He has been represented as very saving" JOHNSON "With his domestick saving we have nothing to do I remember drinking tea with him long ago, when Peg Woffington made it, and he grumbled at her for making it too strong"¹ He had then begun to feel money in his purse, and did not know when he should have enough of it."

On the subject of wealth, the proper use of it, and the effects of that art which is called œconomy, he observed, "It is wonderful to think how men of very large estates not only spend their yearly income, but are often actually in want of money It is clear they have not value for what they spend Lord Shelburne told me, that a man of high rank, who looks into his own affairs, may have all that he ought to have, all that can be of any use, or appear with any advantage, for five thousand pounds a year. Therefore, a great proportion must go in waste, and, indeed, this is the case with most people, whatever their fortune is" BOSWELL. "I have no doubt, Sir, of this. But how is it? What is waste?" JOHNSON "Why, Sir, breaking bottles, and a thousand other things. Waste cannot be accurately told, though we are sensible how destructive it is Œconomy on the one hand, by which a certain income is made to maintain a man genteelly, and waste on the other, by which, on the same income, another man lives shabbily, cannot be defined It is a very nice thing: as one man wears his coat out much sooner than another, we cannot tell how"

We talked of war. JOHNSON "Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier, or not having been at sea" BOSWELL "Lord Mansfield does not." JOHNSON "Sir, if Lord Mansfield were in a company of General Officers and Admirals who have been in service, he would shrink, he'd wish to creep under the table." BOSWELL. "No, he'd think he could try them all" JOHNSON. "Yes, if he could catch them but they'd try him much sooner. No, Sir, were Socrates and Charles the Twelfth of Sweden both present in any company, and Socrates to say, 'Follow me, and hear a lecture in philosophy,' and Charles, laying his hand on his sword, to say, 'Follow me, and dethrone the Czar,' a man would

* When Johnson told this little anecdote to Sir Joshua Reynolds, he mentioned a circumstance which he omitted to-day — "Why (said Garrick,) it is as red as blood"

¹ This was at the time when he, the actress and Macklin set up housekeeping together. The latter was unwearied

in propagating stories about Garrick's stinginess, exhibited, as he said, at this time — *Ku kham's Life of Macklin*

be ashamed to follow Socrates. Sir, the impression is universal : yet it is strange. As to the sailor, when you look down from the quarter-deck to the space below, you see the utmost extremity of human misery such crowding, such filth, such stench !" BOSWELL. "Yet sailors are happy" JOHNSON "They are happy as brutes are happy, with a piece of fresh meat, with the grossest sensuality. But, Sir, the profession of soldiers and sailors has the dignity of danger Mankind reverence those who have got over fear, which is so general a weakness" SCOTT. "But is not courage mechanical, and to be acquired?" JOHNSON. "Why yes, Sir, in a collective sense Soldiers consider themselves only as parts of a great machine" SCOTT. "We find people fond of being sailors" JOHNSON "I cannot account for that, any more than I can account for other strange perversions of imagination"

His abhorrence of the profession of a sailor was uniformly violent, but in conversation he always exalted the profession of a soldier. And yet I have, in my large and various collection of his writings, a letter to an eminent friend, in which he expresses himself thus "My god-son called on me lately He is weary, and rationally weary, of a military life If you can place him in some other state, I think you may increase his happiness, and secure his virtue. A soldier's time is passed in distress and danger, or in idleness and corruption" Such was his cool reflection in his study, but whenever he was warmed and animated by the presence of company, he, like other philosophers, whose minds are impregnated with poetical fancy, caught the common enthusiasm for splendid renown

He talked of Mr Charles Fox, of whose abilities he thought highly, but observed, that he did not talk much at our club I have heard Mr Gibbon remark, "that Mr Fox could not be afraid of Dr Johnson ; yet he certainly was very shy of saying any thing in Dr Johnson's presence" Mr Scott now quoted what was said of Alcibiades by a Greek poet, to which Johnson assented.

He told us, that he had given Mrs Montagu a catalogue of all Daniel Defoe's works of imagination ; most, if not all of which, as well as of his other works, he now enumerated, allowing a considerable share of merit to a man, who, bred a silversmith, had written so variously and so well. Indeed, his "*Robinson Crusoe*" is enough of itself to establish his reputation

He expressed great indignation at the imposture of the Cock-lane Ghost, and related, with much satisfaction, how he had assisted in detecting the cheat, and had published an account of it in the newspapers. Upon this subject I incautiously offended him, by

pressing him with too many questions, and he shewed his displeasure. I apologised, saying that "I asked questions in order to be instructed and entertained; I repaired eagerly to the fountain; but that the moment he gave me a hint, the moment he put a lock upon the well, I desisted."—"But, Sir, (said he,) that is forcing one to do a disagreeable thing," and he continued to rate me. "Nay, Sir, (said I,) when you have put a lock upon the well, so that I can no longer drink, do not make the fountain of your wit play upon me and wet me."

He sometimes could not bear being teased with questions. I was once present when a gentleman¹ asked so many, as, "What did you do, Sir?" "What did you say, Sir?" that he at last grew enraged, and said, "I will not be put to the *question*. Don't you consider, Sir, that these are not the manners of a gentleman? I will not be baited with *what*, and *why*; what is this? what is that? why is a cow's tail long? why is a fox's tail bushy?" The gentleman, who was a good deal out of countenance, said, "Why, Sir, you are so good, that I venture to trouble you." JOHNSON. "Sir, my being so *good* is no reason why you should be so *ill*."

Talking of the Justitia hulk at Woolwich, in which criminals were punished, by being confined to labour, he said, "I do not see that they are punished by this: they must have worked equally had they never been guilty of stealing. They now only work; so, after all, they have gained; what they stole is clear gain to them; the confinement is nothing. Every man who works is confined: the smith to his shop, the tailor to his garret." BOSWELL. "And Lord Mansfield to his Court." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir. You know the notion of confinement may be extended, as in the song, 'Every island is a prison' There is, in Dodsley's collection, a copy of verses to the authour of that song."

Smith's Latin verses on Pococke, the great traveller, were mentioned. He repeated some of them, and said they were Smith's best verses.

He talked with an uncommon animation of travelling into dis-

¹ That the "gentleman" was Boswell himself is plain from a note in Mrs Piozzi's *Marginalia* on this passage "I have been so put to the question by Bozzy this morning," said Dr Johnson, one day, "that I am now panting for breath. One question was, 'Pray, Sir, can you tell why an apple is round and a

pear pointed?' Would not such a talk make a man hang himself?" The favourable attitude in which Boswell places himself in the preceding paragraph contrasts amusingly with that of the present, where he disguises himself. "I was once present," &c.

tant countries, that the mind was enlarged by it, and that an acquisition of dignity of character was derived from it. He expressed a particular enthusiasm with respect to visiting the wall of China. I caught it for the moment, and said I really believed I should go and see the wall of China had I not children, of whom it was my duty to take care. "Sir, (said he,) by doing so, you would do what would be of importance in raising your children to eminence. There would be a lustre reflected upon them from your spirit and curiosity. They would be at all times regarded as the children of a man who had gone to view the wall of China. I am serious, Sir."

When we had left Mr Scott's, he said, "Will you go home with me?" "Sir, (said I,) it is late, but I'll go with you for three minutes." JOHNSON. "Or four." We went to Mrs Williams's room, where we found Mr Allen, the printer, who was the landlord of his house in Bolt-court, a worthy obliging man, and his very old acquaintance, and what was exceedingly amusing, though he was of a very diminutive size, he used, even in Johnson's presence, to imitate the stately periods and slow and solemn utterance of the great man. I this evening boasted, that although I did not write what is called stenography, or shorthand, in appropriated characters devised for the purpose, I had a method of my own of writing half words, and leaving out some altogether, so as yet to keep the substance and language of any discourse which I heard so much in view, that I could give it very completely soon after taking it down. He defied me, as he had once defied an actual short-hand writer, and he made the experiment by reading slowly and distinctly a part of Robertson's "History of America," while I endeavoured to write it in my way of taking notes. It was found that I had it very imperfectly, the conclusion from which was, that its excellence was principally owing to a studied arrangement of words, which could not be varied or abridged without an essential injury.

On Sunday, April 12, I found him at home before dinner, Dr. Dodd's poem entitled "Thoughts in Prison," was lying upon his table. This appearing to me an extraordinary effort by a man who was in Newgate for a capital crime, I was desirous to hear Johnson's opinion of it: to my surprize, he told me he had not read a line of it. I took up the book and read a passage to him. JOHNSON. "Pretty well, if you are previously disposed to like them." I read another passage, with which he was better pleased. He then took the book into his own hands, and having looked at the prayer at the end of it, he said, "What evidence is

there that this was composed the night before he suffered. I do not believe it." He then read aloud where he prays for the King, &c and observed, "Sir, do you think that a man the night before he is to be hanged cares for the succession of a royal family?" Though he *may* have composed this prayer then. A man who has been canting all his life may cant to the last. And yet a man who has been refused a pardon after so much petitioning, would hardly be praying thus fervently for the King."

He and I, and Mrs. Williams, went to dine with the Reverend Dr. Percy. Talking of Goldsmith, Johnson said, he was very envious. I defended him, by observing that he owned it frankly upon all occasions JOHNSON. "Sir, you are enforcing the charge. He had so much envy that he could not conceal it. He was so full of it that he overflowed. He talked of it to be sure often enough Now, Sir, what a man avows, he is not ashamed to think, though many a man thinks, what he is ashamed to avow. We are all envious naturally, but by checking envy we get the better of it So we are all thieves naturally; a child always tries to get at what it wants, the nearest way; by good instruction and good habits this is cured, till a man has not even an inclination to seize what is another's; has no struggle with himself about it."

And here I shall record a scene of too much heat between Dr Johnson and Dr Percy, which I should have suppressed, were it not that it gave occasion to display the truly tender and benevolent heart of Johnson, who as soon as he found a friend was at all hurt by any thing which he had "said in his wrath," was not only prompt and desirous to be reconciled, but exerted himself to make ample reparation

Books of Travels having been mentioned, Johnson praised Pennant very highly, as he did at Dunvegan, in the Isle of Sky.* Dr Percy still holding himself as the heir male of the ancient Percies, and having the warmest and most dutiful attachment to

* "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," edit 3, p. 221

Cor et Ad—Line 33 On "Percies" put the following note—"See this accurately stated, and the descent of his family from the Earls of Northumberland clearly deduced in the Reverend Dr Nash's excellent 'History of Worcestershire,' vol ii. p 318 The Doctor has subjoined a note, in which he says, 'The Editor hath seen, and carefully examined the proofs of all the particulars above-mentioned, now in the possession of the Reverend Thomas Percy'

"The same proofs I have also myself carefully examined, and have seen some additional proofs which have occurred since the Doctor's book was published, and both as a Lawyer accustomed to the consideration of evidence, and as a Genealogist versed in the study of pedigrees, I am fully satisfied I cannot help observing, as a circumstance of no small moment, that in tracing the Bishop of Dromore's genealogy, essential aid was given by the late Elizabeth Duchess of Northumberland, heiress of that

the noble house of Northumberland, could not sit quietly and hear a man praised, who had spoken disrespectfully of Alnwick-Castle and the Duke's pleasure-grounds, especially as he thought meanly of his travels. He therefore opposed Johnson eagerly. JOHNSON "Pennant in what he has said of Alnwick, has done what he intended, he has made you very angry." PERCY. "He has said the garden is *trim*, which is representing it like a citizen's parterre, when the truth is, there is a very large extent of fine turf and gravel walks." JOHNSON. "According to your own account, Sir, Pennant is right. It is *trim*. Here is grass cut close, and gravel rolled smooth. Is not that *trim*? The extent is nothing against that, a mile may be as *trim* as a square yard. Your extent puts me in mind of the citizens' enlarged dinner, two pieces of roast beef, and two puddings. There is no variety, no mind exerted in laying out the ground, no trees." PERCY. "He pretends to give the natural history of Northumberland, and yet takes no notice of the immense number of trees planted there of late." JOHNSON. "That, Sir, has nothing to do with the *natural* history; that is *civil* history. A man who gives the natural history of the oak, is not to tell how many oaks have been planted in this place or that. A man who gives the natural history of the cow, is not to tell how many cows are milked at Islington. The animal is the same, whether milked in the Park or at Islington." PERCY. "Pennant does not describe well, a carrier who goes along the side of Lochlomond would describe it better." JOHNSON. "I think he describes very well." PERCY. "I travelled after him." JOHNSON. "And I travelled after him." PERCY. "But, my good friend, you are short-sighted, and do not see so well as I do." I wondered at Dr. Percy's venturing thus. Dr. Johnson said nothing at the time, but inflammable particles were collecting for a cloud to burst. In a little while Dr. Percy said something more in disparagement of Pennant. JOHNSON. (pointedly) "This is the resentment of a narrow-mind, because he did not find every thing in Northumberland." PERCY. (feeling the stroke) "Sir, you may be as rude as you please." JOHNSON. "Hold, Sir! Don't talk of rudeness, remember, Sir, you told me (puffing hard with passion struggling for a vent) I was short-sighted. We have done with civility. We are to be as rude as we please." PERCY. "Upon

illustrious House, a lady not only of high dignity of spirit, such as became her noble blood, but of excellent understanding and lively talents. With a fair pride I can boast of the honour of her Grace's correspondence, specimens of which adorn my archives."

my honour, Sir, I did not mean to be uncivil." JOHNSON "I cannot say so, Sir, for I *did* mean to be uncivil, thinking *you* had been uncivil." Dr. Percy rose, ran up to him, and taking him by the hand, assured him affectionately that his meaning had been misunderstood; upon which a reconciliation instantly took place. JOHNSON. "My dear Sir, I am willing you shall *hang* Pennant." PERCY. (resuming the former subject) "Pennant complains that the helmet is not hung out to invite to the hall of hospitality. Now I never heard that it was a custom to hang out a *helmet*." JOHNSON. "Hang him up, hang him up." BOSWELL. (humouring the joke) "Hang out his skull instead of a helmet, and you may drink ale out of it in your hall of Odin, as he is your enemy; that will be truly ancient. *There* will be 'Northern Antiquities'" JOHNSON "He's a *Whig*, Sir; a *sad dog* (smiling at his own violent expressions, merely for *political* difference of opinion). But he's the best traveller I ever read, he observes more things than any one else does"

I could not help thinking that this was too high praise of a writer who traversed a wide extent of country in such haste, that he could put together only curt frittered fragments of his own, and afterwards procured supplemental intelligence from parochial ministers, and others not the best qualified or most impartial narrators, whose ungenerous prejudice against the house of Stuart glares in misrepresentation; a writer, who at best treats merely of superficial objects, and shews no philosophical investigation of character and manners, such as Johnson has exhibited in his masterly "*Journey*," over part of the same ground; and who it should seem from a desire of ingratiating himself with the Scotch, has flattered the people of North-Britain so inordinately and with so little discrimination, that the judicious and candid amongst them must be disgusted, while they value more the plain, just, yet kindly report of Johnson.

Second Edition, line 14, note — The title of a book translated by Dr. Percy

Cor et Ad — After line 32, read as follows — "Having impartially censured Mr Pennant, as a Traveller in Scotland, let me allow him from authorities much better than mine, his deserved praise as an able Zoologist, and let me also from my own understanding and feelings, acknowledge the merit of his '*LONDON*,' which, though said to be not quite accurate in some particulars, is one of the most pleasing topographical performances that ever appeared in any language. Mr Pennant, like his countrymen in general, has the true spirit of a *Gentleman*. As a proof of it, I shall quote from his '*LONDON*' the passage, in which he speaks of my illustrious friend. 'I must by no means omit *Bolt-court*, the long residence of DOCTOR SAMUEL JOHNSON, a man of the strongest natural abilities, great learning, a most retentive memory, of the deepest and most unaffected piety and morality, mingled with those numerous weaknesses and prejudices which his friends have kindly taken care to draw from

We had a calm after the storm, staid the evening and supt, and were pleasant and gay. But Dr Percy told me he was very uneasy at what had passed, for there was a gentleman there who had recently been admitted into the confidence of the Northumberland family, to whom he hoped to appear more respectable, by shewing him how intimate he was with the great Dr. Johnson, and now the gentleman would go away with an impression much to his disadvantage, as if Johnson treated him with disregard, which might do him an essential injury. He begged I would mention this to Dr. Johnson, which I afterwards did. His observation upon it was, "This comes of *stratagem*; had he told me that he wished to appear to advantage before that gentleman, he should have been at the top of the house all the time." He spoke of Dr. Percy in the handsomest terms. "Then, Sir, (said I,) may I be allowed to suggest a mode by which you may effectually counteract any unfavourable report of what passed. I will write a letter to you upon the subject of the unlucky contest of that day, and you will be kind enough to put in writing as an answer to that letter, what you have now said, and in short all that you can say to Dr Percy's advantage; and as Lord Percy is to dine with us at General Paoli's soon, I will take an opportunity to read the correspondence in his Lordship's presence." This friendly scheme was accordingly carried into execution without Dr Percy's knowledge. Johnson's letter was studiously framed to place Dr. Percy's unquestionable merit in the fairest point of view; and I contrived that Lord Percy should hear the correspondence, by introducing it at General Paoli's, as an instance of Dr. Johnson's kind disposition towards one in whom his Lordship was interested. Thus our friend Percy was raised higher in the estimation of those by whom he wished most to be regarded. I breakfasted the day after with him, and informed him of my

their dread abode. I brought on myself his transient anger, by observing that in his tour in *Scotland*, he once had long and woeful experience of oats being the food of men in *Scotland* as they were of horses in *England*. It was a national reflection unworthy of him, and I shot my bolt. In return he gave me a tender hug.^b *Con amore* he also said of me '*The dog is a Whig*'.^c I admired the virtues of Lord Russell, and pitied his fall. I should have been a Whig at the Revolution. There have been periods since, in which I should have been, what I now am, a moderate Tory, a supporter, as far as my little influence extends, of a well-poised balance between the crown and people: but should the scale preponderate against the *Salus populi*, that moment may it be said '*The dog's a Whig*'!"

^a "This is the common cant against faithful Biography. Does the worthy gentleman mean that I, who was taught discrimination of character by Johnson, should have omitted his frailties, and, in short, have *bedaubed* him as the worthy gentleman has bedaubed Scotland?"—BOSWELL.

^b "See Dr. JOHNSON'S '*Journey to the Western Islands*,' p. 296.—see his Dictionary article, *oats*—and my '*Voyage to the Hebrides*,' first edition—PENNANT."

^c "Mr Boswell's Journal, p. 386.—PENNANT."

Second Edition—Line 4. Altered to "who was acquainted with him," &c.

scheme, and its happy completion, for which he thanked me in the warmest terms, and was highly delighted with Dr. Johnson's letter in his praise, of which I gave him a copy. He said, "I would rather have this than degrees from all the Universities in Europe. It will be for me, and my children and grandchildren." Dr. Johnson having afterwards asked me if I had given him a copy of it, and being told I had, was offended, and insisted that I should get it back, which I did. As, however, he did not desire me to destroy either the original or the copy, or forbid me to let it be seen, I think myself at liberty to apply to it his general declaration to me concerning his other letters, "That he did not choose they should be published in his life-time, but had no objection to their appearing after his death." I shall therefore insert this kindly correspondence, having faithfully narrated the circumstances accompanying it.

To Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I beg leave to address you in behalf of our friend Dr. Percy, who was much hurt by what you said to him that day we dined at his house,* when in the course of the dispute as to Pennant's merit as a traveller, you told Percy that 'he had the resentment of a narrow mind against Pennant, because he did not find every thing in Northumberland.' Percy is sensible that you did not mean to injure him, but he is vexed to think that your behaviour to him upon that occasion may be interpreted as a proof that he is despised by you, which I know is not the case. I have told him, that the charge of being narrow-minded was only as to the particular point in question, and that he had the merit of being a martyr to his noble family.

"Earl Percy is to dine with General Paoli next Friday, and I should be sincerely glad to have it in my power to satisfy his Lordship how well you think of Dr. Percy, who, I find, apprehends that your good opinion of him may be of very essential consequence; and who assures me, that he has the highest respect and the warmest affection for you.

"I have only to add, that my suggesting this occasion for the exercise of your candour and generosity, is altogether unknown to Dr. Percy, and proceeds from my good-will towards him, and my persuasion that you will be happy to do him an essential kindness. I am, more and more, my dear Sir,

"Your most faithful and affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

* Sunday, April 12, 1778.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"SIR,—The debate between Dr Percy and me is one of those foolish controversies, which begin upon a question of which neither party cares how it is decided, and which is, nevertheless, continued to acrimony, by the vanity with which every man resists confutation. Dr Percy's warmth proceeded from a cause which, perhaps, does him more honour than he could have derived from juster criticism. His abhorrence of Pennant proceeded from his opinion that Pennant had wantonly and indecently censured his patron. His anger made him resolve that for having been once wrong, he never should be right. Pennant has much in his notions that I do not like; but still I think him a very intelligent traveller. If Percy is really offended, I am sorry; for he is a man whom I never knew to offend any one. He is a man very willing to learn, and very able to teach; a man, out of whose company I never go without having learned something. It is sure that he vexes me sometimes, but I am afraid it is by making me feel my own ignorance. So much extension of mind, and so much minute accuracy of enquiry, if you survey your whole circle of acquaintance, you will find so scarce, if you find it at all, that you will value Percy by comparison. Lord Hailes is somewhat like him: but Lord Hailes does not, perhaps, go beyond him in research, and I do not know that he equals him in elegance. Percy's attention to poetry has given grace and splendour to his studies of antiquity. A mere antiquarian is a rugged being.

"Upon the whole, you see that what I might say in sport or petulance to him, is very consistent with full conviction of his merit. I am, dear Sir,

"Your most, &c.

"April 23, 1778"

"SAM. JOHNSON.

To the Reverend Dr. PERCY, Northumberland-house.

"DEAR SIR,—I wrote to Dr Johnson on the subject of the *Pennantian* controversy, and have received from him an answer which will delight you. I read it yesterday to Dr Robertson, at the Exhibition, and at dinner to Lord Percy, General Oglethorpe, &c. who dined with us at General Paoli's, who was also a witness to the high *testimony* to your honour.

"General Paoli desires the favour of your company next Tuesday to dinner, to meet Dr Johnson. If I can, I will call on you to-day. I am, with sincere regard,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"South Audley-street, April 25 "

"JAMES BOSWELL.

Cor. & Ad.—Line 41 On "BOSWELL" put the following note.—"Though the

On Monday, April 13, I dined with Johnson at Mr Langton's, where were Dr Porteus, then Bishop of Chester, now of London, and Dr. Stinton. He was at first in a very silent frame. Before dinner he said nothing but "Pretty baby," to one of the children. Langton said very well to me afterwards, that he could repeat Johnson's conversation before dinner, as Johnson had said that he could repeat a complete chapter of "The Natural History of Iceland," from the Danish of *Horrebow*, the whole of which was exactly thus :

"CHAP LXXII *Concerning snakes.*

"There are no snakes to be met with throughout the whole island."

At dinner we talked of another mode in the news-papers of giving modern characters in sentences from the classics, and of the passage

*"Parcus Deorum cultor, et infrequens,
Insanientis dum sapientiae
Consultus erro, nunc retrorsum
Vela dare, atque iterare cursus
Cogor relictos."*

being well applied to Soame Jennyns, who, after having wandered in the wilds of infidelity, had returned to the Christian faith. Mr. Langton asked Johnson as to the propriety of *sapientiae consultus*. JOHNSON "Though *consultus* was primarily an adjective, like

Bishop of Dromore kindly answered the letters which I wrote to him, relative to Dr. Johnson's early history, yet, in justice to him, I think it proper to add, that the account of the foregoing conversation, and the subsequent transaction, as well as of some other conversations in which he is mentioned, has been given to the publick without previous communication with his Lordship¹

¹ The bishop, when supplying Boswell with some recollections of Johnson, had desired that his name should not be given. Boswell, in plain terms, declined to comply. "I owe it to the authenticity of my work, to its respectability, and to the credit of my illustrious friend, to introduce as many names of eminent persons as I can. Believe me, my Lord, you are not the only Bishop in the number of great men with which my pages are graced. I am quite resolute in this matter"—(*Nicholls*). After this blunt declaration the meaning of the note becomes clear. He felt that the bishop would peremptorily refuse to allow the

report of this little dispute to appear, and by the apparent candour of this admission hoped to anticipate any complaint. The bishop appears to have been a "touchy," and rather quarrelsome person. Mr Cradock describes him as going specially "to tease Johnson about Gibbon's pamphlet," and purposely inflaming him. He was sensitive enough to resent Johnson's harmless parody on his ballad, "I put my hat upon my head," and broke off with Garrick because a request for a seat at the theatre, sent in as the actor was going on the stage, was not attended to. He had also a quarrel with Goldsmith.

amicus it came to be used as a substantive. So we have *Jurisconsultus*, a consult in law "

We talked of the styles of different painters, and how certainly a connoisseur could distinguish them. I asked if there was as clear a difference of styles in language as in painting, or even as in hand-writing, so that the composition of every individual may be distinguished? JOHNSON "Yes. Those who have a style of eminent excellence, such as Dryden and Milton, can always be distinguished " I had no doubt of this, but what I wanted to know was, whether there was really a peculiar style to every man whatever, as there is certainly a peculiar hand-writing, a peculiar countenance, not widely different in many, yet always enough to be distinctive :

" ——— ——— *Facies non omnibus una*
Nec diversa tamen " ———

The Bishop thought not, and said, he supposed that many pieces in Dodsley's collection of poems, though all very pretty, had nothing appropriated in their style, and in that particular could not be at all distinguished JOHNSON "Why, Sir, I think every man whatever has a peculiar style, which may be discovered by nice examination and comparison with others : but a man must write a great deal to make his style obviously discernable As logicians say, this appropriation of style is infinite *in potestate*, limited *in actu*."

Mr Topham Beauclerk came in the evening, and he and Dr. Johnson and I staid to supper. It was mentioned that Dr Dodd had once wished to be a member of THE LITERARY CLUB. JOHNSON. "I should be sorry if any of our club were hanged. I will not say but some of them deserve it." * BEAUCLERK. (supposing this to be aimed at persons for whom he had at that time a wonderful fancy, which, however, did not last long,) was irritated, and eagerly said, "You, Sir, have a friend ¹ (naming him) who deserves to be hanged; for he speaks behind their backs against those with whom he lives on the best terms, and attacks them in the news-papers He certainly ought to be *kicked*." JOHNSON. "Sir, we all do this in some degree, '*Veniam petimus damusque vicissim*.' To be sure it may be done so much that a man may deserve to be kicked." BEAUCLERK. "He is very malignant " JOHNSON. "No, Sir, he is not malignant. He is mischievous, if you will He would do no man an essential injury, he may, indeed, love to make sport of people

* See Note, p 171 of this Volume.

¹ Probably George Stevens.

by vexing their vanity. I, however, once knew an old gentleman who was absolutely malignant. He really wished evil to others, and rejoiced at it." BOSWELL. "The gentleman, Mr. Beauclerk, against whom you are so violent, is I know, a man of good principles." BEAUCLERK. "Then he does not wear them out in practice."

Dr. Johnson, who as I have observed before, delighted in discrimination of character, and having a masterly knowledge of human nature, was willing to take men as they are, imperfect and with a mixture of good and bad qualities, I suppose thought he had said enough in defence of his friend; of whose merits, notwithstanding his exceptionable points, he had a just value, and added no more on the subject.

On Tuesday, April 14, I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, with General Paoli and Mr. Langton. General Oglethorpe declaimed against luxury. JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, every state of society is as luxurious as it can be. Men always take the best they can get." OGLETHORPE. "But the best depends much upon ourselves, and if we can be as well satisfied with plain things, we are in the wrong to accustom our palates to what is high-seasoned and expensive. What says Addison in his 'Cato,' speaking of the Numidian:

'Coarse are his meals, the fortune of the chase,
Amid the running stream he slakes his thirst,
Toils all the day, and at the approach of night,
On the first friendly bank he throws him down,
Or rests his head upon a rock till morn,
And if the following day he chance to find
A new repast, or an untasted spring,
Blesses his stars! and thinks it luxury!'

Let us have *that* kind of luxury, Sir, if you will." JOHNSON. "But hold, Sir, to be merely satisfied is not enough. It is in refinement and elegance that the civilized man differs from the savage. A great part of our industry, and all our ingenuity is exercised in procuring pleasure; and, Sir, a hungry man has not the same pleasure in eating a plain dinner, that a hungry man has in eating a luxurious dinner. You see I put the case fairly. A hungry man may have as much, nay, more pleasure in eating a plain dinner, than a man grown fastidious has in eating a luxurious dinner. But I suppose the man who decides between the two dinners, to be equally a hungry man."

Talking of different governments. JOHNSON. "The more con-

tracted that power is, the more easily it is destroyed. A country governed by a despot is an inverted cone Government there cannot be so firm as when it rests upon a broad basis gradually contracted, as the government of Great Britain, which is founded on the parliament, then is in the privy-council, then in the King " BOSWELL. " Power when contracted into the person of a despot may be easily destroyed, as the prince may be cut off. So Caligula wished that the people of Rome had but one neck, that he might cut them off at a blow " ¹ OGLETHORPE "It was of the Senate he wished that The Senate by its usurpation controuled both the Emperour and the people. And don't you think that we see too much of that in our own parliament ?"

Dr Johnson endeavoured to trace the etymology of Maccaronick verses, which he thought were of Italian invention from Maccaroni: but on being informed that this would infer that they were the most common and easy verses, maccaroni being the most ordinary and simple food, he was at a loss, for he said, " He rather should have supposed it to import in its primitive signification, a composition of several things, for Maccaronick verses are verses made out of a mixture of different languages, that is, of one language with the termination of another." I suppose there is almost no language in any country where there is any learning, in which that motley ludicrous specious of composition may not be found It is particularly droll in Low Dutch The "*Polemomiddinia*" of Drummond of Hawthornden, in which there is a jumble of many languages moulded, as if it were, all in Latin, is well known Mr. Langton made us laugh heartily at one in the Grecian mould, by Joshua Barnes, in which are to be found such comical *Anglo-Ellemisms* as *Κλυββοισιν εβανχθεν*. They were banged with clubs

On Wednesday, April 15, I dined with Dr Johnson at Mr. Dilly's, and was in high spirits, for I had been a good part of the morning with Mr Orme, the able and eloquent historian of Hindostan, who expressed a high admiration of Johnson " I do not care (said he,) on what subject Johnson talks, but I love better to hear him talk than any body. He either gives you new thoughts, or a new colouring. It is a shame to the nation that he has not been more liberally rewarded. Had I been George the Third, and thought as he did about America, I would have given Johnson three hundred a year for his 'Taxation no Tyranny' alone " I repeated this, and Johnson was much pleased with such praise from such a man as Orme.

¹ As Mr Croker shows, Boswell was right, and Oglethorpe wrong.

At Mr. Dilly's to-day were Mrs. Knowles, the ingenious Quaker lady,* Miss Seward, the poetess of Lichfield, the Rev Dr Mayo, and the Rev Mr. Beresford, Tutor to the Duke of Bedford. Before dinner Dr. Johnson seized upon Mr. Charles Sheridan's¹ "Account of the late Revolution in Sweden," and seemed to read it ravenously as if he devoured it, which was to all appearance his method of studying "He knows how to read better than any one (said Mrs. Knowles), he gets at the substance of a book directly, he tears out the heart of it" He kept it wrapt up in the table-cloth in his lap during the time of dinner, from an avidity to have one entertainment in readiness when he should have finished another, resembling (if I may use so coarse a simile) a dog who holds a bone in his paws in reserve, while he eats something else which has been thrown to him

The subject of cookery having been very naturally introduced at a table where Johnson, who boasted of the niceness of his palate, owned that "he always found a good dinner," he said, "I could write a better book of cookery than has ever yet been written, it should be a book upon philosophical principles. Pharmacy is now made much more simple Cookery may be made so too A prescription which is now compounded of five ingredients, had formerly fifty in it So in cookery, if the nature of the ingredients be well known, much fewer will do Then as you cannot make bad meat good, I would tell what is the best butcher's meat, the best beef, the best pieces, how to choose young fowls; the proper season of different vegetables, and then how to roast and boil, and compound." DILLY "Mrs Glasse's 'Cookery,' which is the best, was written by Dr Hill. Half the *trade* know this" JOHNSON. "Well, Sir. This shews how much better the subject of Cookery may be treated

* Dr Johnson, describing her needle-work in one of his letters to Mrs Thrale, Vol I p 326, uses the learned word *sutile*, which Mrs Thrale has mistaken, and made the phrase injurious by writing "*futile* pictures"

Cor et Ad—Line 28 On "trade" put the following note—"As Physicians are called the *Faculty*, and Counsellors at Law the *Profession*, the Booksellers of London are denominated the *Trade* Johnson disapproved of these denominations"

¹ Brother to Richard B Sheridan

² Opposite this charge Mrs Piozzi writes (*Marginalia*), "It was no mistake As pictures they are *futile*, so are Miss Linwood's The moth, the sunshine, everything may destroy the beautiful work, alas!" Dr Lort wrote to Bishop Percy "that he had desired a sight of the original letter in order to determine a wager There it

plainly appeared that a dash had been put across the long s (Johnson's usual mode of writing that letter), perhaps by the printer or corrector of the press"—(*Perry Cor*, ap *Nicholls*) This was probably done by Mrs Thrale herself, when preparing the letters for publication, and she had no doubt forgotten the circumstance.

by a philosopher. I doubt if the book be written by Dr. Hill; for, in Mrs Glasse's 'Cookery,' which I have looked into, salt petre and sal prunella are spoken of as different substances, whereas sal prunella is only salt petre burnt on charcoal, and Hill could not be ignorant of this. However, as the greatest part of such a book is made by transcription, this mistake may have been carelessly adopted. But you shall see what a Book of Cookery I shall make 'I shall agree with Mr Dilly for the copy-right." MISS SEWARD "That would be Hercules with the distaff indeed" JOHNSON "No, Madam Women can spin very well; but they cannot make a good book of Cookery"

JOHNSON "O! Mr Dilly—you must know that an English Benedictine Monk at Paris has translated 'The Duke of Berwick's Memoirs,' from the original French, and has sent them to me to sell. I offered them to Strahan, who sent them back with this answer —'That the first book he had published was the Duke of Berwick's Life by which he had lost, and he hated the name'— Now I honestly tell you, that Strahan has refused them, but I also honestly tell you, that he did it upon no principle, for he never looked into them." DILLY "Are they well translated, Sir?" JOHNSON "Why, Sir, very well—in a style very current and very clear. I have written to the Benedictine to give me an answer upon two points—What evidence is there that the letters are authentick? For if they are not authentick they are nothing—And how long will it be before the original French is published? For if the French edition is not to appear for a considerable time, the translation will be almost as valuable as an original book. They will make two volumes in octavo, and I have undertaken to correct every sheet as it comes from the press." Mr Dilly desired to see them and said he would send for them. He asked Dr Johnson if he would write a Preface to them. JOHNSON "No, Sir. The Benedictines were very kind to me, and I'll do what I undertook to do, but I will not mingle my name with them. I am to gain nothing by them. I'll turn them loose upon the world, and let them take their chance." DR. MAYO "Pray Sir, are Ganganelli's letters authentick?" JOHNSON "No, Sir. Voltaire put the same question to the editor of them, that I did to Macpherson—Where are the originals?"

Mrs Knowles affected to complain that men had much more liberty allowed them than women. JOHNSON "Why, Madam, women have all the liberty they should wish to have. We have all the labour and the danger, and the women all the advantage. We go to sea, we build houses, we do every thing, in short, to pay our

court to the women." MRS. KNOWLES. "The Doctor reasons very wittily, but not convincingly. Now, take the instance of building, the mason's wife, if she is ever seen in liquor, is ruined. The mason may get himself drunk as often as he pleases, with little loss of character, nay, may let his wife and children starve." JOHNSON. "Madam, you must consider, if the mason does get himself drunk, and let his wife and children starve, the parish will oblige him to find security for their maintenance. We have different modes of restraining evil. Stocks for the men, a ducking-stool for women, and a pound for beasts. If we require more perfection from women than from ourselves, it is doing them honour. And women have not the same temptations that we have. They may always live in virtuous company, men must mix in the world indiscriminately. If a woman has no inclination to do what is wrong, being secured from it is no restraint to her. I am at liberty to walk into the Thames; but if I were to try it, my friends would restrain me in Bedlam, and I should be obliged to them." MRS. KNOWLES. "Still, Doctor, I cannot help thinking it a hardship that more indulgence is allowed to men than to women. It gives a superiority to men, to which I do not see how they are entitled." JOHNSON. "It is plain, Madam, one or other must have the superiority. As Shakspeare says, 'If two men ride on horseback, one must ride behind.'" DILLY. "I suppose, Sir, Mrs. Knowles would have them to ride in panniers, one on each side." JOHNSON. "Then, Sir, the horse would throw them both." MRS. KNOWLES. "Well, I hope that in another world the sexes will be equal." BOSWELL. "That is being too ambitious, Madam. We might as well desire to be equal with the angels. We shall all, I hope, be happy in a future state, but we must not expect to be all happy in the same degree. It is enough if we be happy according to our several capacities. A worthy carman will get to heaven as well as Sir Isaac Newton. Yet, though equally good, they will not have the same degrees of happiness." JOHNSON. "Probably not."

Upon this subject I had once before sounded him, by mentioning the late Reverend Mr. Brown, of Utrecht's image, that a great and small glass, though equally full, did not hold an equal quantity, which he threw out to refute David Hume's saying, that a little miss, going to dance at a ball, in a fine new dress, was as happy as a great orator, after having made an eloquent and applauded speech. After some thought, Johnson said, "I come over to the parson." As an instance of coincidence of thinking, Mr. Dilly told me, that Dr. King, a late dissenting minister in London, said to him, upon the happiness in a future state of good men of different capa-

cities, "A pail does not hold so much as a tub, but, if it be equally full, it has no reason to complain Every saint in heaven will have as much happiness as he can hold " Mr. Dilly thought this a clear, though a familiar illustration of the phrase, "One star differeth from another in brightness."

Dr Mayo having asked Johnson's opinion of Soame Jennyns's "View of the internal Evidence of the Christian Religion,"—JOHNSON "I think it a pretty book, not very theological indeed, and there seems to be an affectation of ease and carelessness, as if it were not suitable to his character to be very serious about the matter." BOSWELL. "He may have intended this to introduce his book the better among genteel people, who might be unwilling to read too grave a treatise There is a general levity in the age We have physicians now with bag-wigs, may we not have airy divines, at least somewhat less solemn in their appearance than they used to be?" JOHNSON. "Jennyns might mean as you say." BOSWELL "You should like his book, Mrs Knowles, as it maintains, as you *friends* do, that courage is not a Christian virtue." MRS KNOWLES. "Yes, indeed, I like him there, but I cannot agree with him, that friendship is not a Christian virtue " JOHNSON. "Why, Madam, strictly speaking, he is right All friendship is preferring the interest of a friend, to the neglect, or, perhaps, against the interest of others, so that an old Greek said, 'He that has *friends* has *no friend*.' Now Christianity recommends universal benevolence, to consider all men as our brethren, which is contrary to the virtue of friendship, as described by the ancient philosophers Surely, Madam, your sect must approve of this, for you call all men *friends* " MRS KNOWLES "We are commanded to do good to all men, 'but especially to them who are of the household of Faith.'" JOHNSON. "Well, Madam. The household of Faith is wide enough " MRS KNOWLES "But, Doctor, our Saviour had twelve Apostles, yet there was *one* whom he *loved*. John was called 'the disciple whom JESUS loved'" JOHNSON. (with eyes sparkling benignantly) "Very well indeed, Madam You have said very well " BOSWELL. "A fine application Pray, Sir, had you ever thought of it?" JOHNSON "I had not, Sir "

From this amiable and pleasing subject, he, I know not how or why, made a sudden transition to one upon which he was a violent aggressor, for he said, I am willing to love all mankind, *except an American*—and his inflammable corruption bursting into horrid fire, he "breathed out threatenings and slaughter," calling them, "Rascals—Robbers—Pirates," and exclaiming, he'd "burn and destroy them." Miss Seward, looking to him with mild but steady

astonishment, said, "Sir, this is an instance that we are always most violent against those whom we have injured."—He was irritated still more by this delicate and keen reproach, and roared out another tremendous volley, which one might fancy could be heard across the Atlantick. During this tempest I sat in great uneasiness, lamenting his heat of temper, till, by degrees, I diverted his attention to other topicks.

DR MAYO (to Dr Johnson) "Play, Sir, have you read Edwards, of New England, on Grace?" JOHNSON "No, Sir." BOSWELL. "It puzzled me so much as to the freedom of the human will, by stating, with wonderful acute ingenuity, our being actuated by a series of motives which we cannot resist, that the only relief I had was to forget it." MAYO. "But he makes the proper distinction between moral and physical necessity." BOSWELL. "Alas, Sir, they come both to the same thing. You may be bound as hard by chains when covered by leather, as when the iron appears. The argument for the moral necessity of human actions is always, I observe, fortified by supposing universal prescience to be one of the attributes of the Deity." JOHNSON "You are surer that you are free, than you are of prescience, you are surer that you can lift up your finger or not as you please, than you are of any conclusion from a deduction of reasoning. But let us consider a little the objection from prescience. It is certain I am either to go home to-night or not; that does not prevent my freedom." BOSWELL. "That it is certain you are *either* to go home or not, does not prevent your freedom, because the liberty of choice between the two is compatible with that certainty. But if *one* of these events be certain *now*, you have no *future* power of volition. If it be certain you are to go home to-night, you *must* go home." JOHNSON "If I am well acquainted with a man, I can judge with great probability how he will act in any case, without his being restrained by my judging. God may have this probability increased to certainty." BOSWELL "When it is increased to *certainly* freedom ceases, because that cannot be certainly foreknown which is not certain at the time, but if it be certain at the time, it is a contradiction in terms to maintain that there can be afterwards any *contingency* dependent upon the exercise of will or any thing else." JOHNSON. "All theory is against the freedom of the will, all experience for it."—I did not push the subject any farther. I was glad to find him so mild in discussing a question of the most abstract nature, which is involved with theological tenets, which he generally would not suffer to be in any degree opposed.*

* If any of my readers are disturbed by this thorny question, I beg leave to recom-

He as usual defended luxury, "You cannot spend money in luxury without doing good to the poor. Nay, you do more good to them by spending it in luxury than by giving it; for by spending it in luxury you make them exert industry, whereas by giving it you keep them idle. I own, indeed, there may be more virtue in giving it immediately in charity than in spending it in luxury, though there may be a pride in that too." Miss Seward asked if this was not Mandeville's doctrine of "private vices publick benefits." Johnson "The fallacy of that book is, that Mandeville defines neither vices nor benefits. He reckons among vices every thing that gives pleasure. He takes the narrowest system of morality, monastick morality, which holds pleasure itself to be a vice, such as eating salt with our fish, because it makes it taste better, and he reckons wealth as a publick benefit, which is by no means always true. Pleasure of itself is not a vice. Having a garden, which we all know to be perfectly innocent, is a great pleasure. At the same time, in this state of being there are many pleasures vices, which however are so immediately agreeable that we can hardly abstain from them. The happiness of heaven will be, that pleasure and virtue will be perfectly consistent. Mandeville puts the case of a man who gets drunk at an alehouse, and says it is a publick benefit, because so much money is got by it to the publick. But it must be considered, that all the good gained by this, through the gradation of alehouse keeper, brewer, maltster, and farmer, is overbalanced by the evil caused to the man and his family by his getting drunk. This is the way to try what is vicious, by ascertaining whether more evil than good is produced by it upon the whole, which is the case in all vice. It may happen that good is produced by vice, but not as vice, for instance, a robber may take money from its owner, and give it to one who will make a better use of it. Here is good produced, but not by the robbery as robbery, but as translation of property. I read Mandeville forty, or I believe fifty years ago. He did not puzzle me, he opened my views into real life very much. No, it is clear that the happiness of society depends on virtue. In Sparta theft was allowed by general consent; theft, therefore, was *there* not a crime, but then there was no security, and what a life must they have had when there was no security. Without truth there must be a dissolution of society. As it is, there is so little truth that we are almost afraid to trust our ears; but how should we be, if falsehood were multiplied ten times?

He then sent to them Letter 69 of Montesquien's *Lettres Persannes*, and the late Mr. John Palmer of Islington's Answer to Dr. Priestley's mechanical arguments for what he calls "Philosophical Necessity."

Society is held together by communication and information; and I remember this remark of Sir Thomas Brown's, "Do the devils lie? No, for then Hell could not subsist"

Talking of Miss ——,¹ a literary lady, he said, "I was obliged to speak to Miss Reynolds, to let her know that I desired she would not flatter me so much" Somebody now observed, "She flatters Garrick" JOHNSON "She is in the right to flatter Garrick She is in the right for two reasons, first, because she has the world with her, who have been praising Garrick these thirty years, and secondly, because she is rewarded for it by Garrick. Why should she flatter *me*? I can do nothing for her Let her carry her praise to a better market. (Then turning to Mrs. Knowles) You, Madam, have been flattering me all the evening, I wish you would give Boswell a little now If you knew his merit as well as I do, you would say a great deal, he is the best travelling companion in the world"

Somebody mentioned the Reverend Mr Mason's prosecution of Mr Murray, the bookseller, for having inserted in a collection of "Gray's Poems," only fifty lines, of which Mr Mason had still the exclusive property, under the statute of Queen Anne, and that Mr Mason had persevered, notwithstanding his being requested to name his own terms of compensation^a Johnson signified his displeasure at Mr. Mason's conduct very strongly, but added by way of shewing that he was not surprised at it, "Mason's a Whig" MRS KNOWLES (not hearing distinctly) "What! a Prig, Sir?" JOHNSON "Worse, Madam, a Whig! But he is both"

I expressed a horror at the thought of death MRS KNOWLES "Nay, thou should'st not have a horror for what is the gate of life" JOHNSON (standing upon the hearth rolling about, with a serious, solemn, and somewhat gloomy air) "No rational man can die without uneasy apprehension" MRS KNOWLES "The Scriptures tell us, 'The righteous shall have *hope* in his death'" JOHNSON "Yes, Madam, that is, he shall not have despair. But, consider, his hope of salvation must be founded on the terms on which it is promised, that the mediation of our SAVIOUR shall be applied to us, namely, obedience, and where obedience has failed, then as suppletory to it, repentance But what man can say that his obedience has been such, as he would approve of in another, or

^a See "A letter to W Mason, A M from J Murray, Bookseller in London," 2d edition, p 29

¹ Hannah More Specimens of her "flattery" of Garrick can be seen in the "Garrick Correspondence"

even in himself upon close examination, or that his repentance has not been such as to require being repented of? No man can be sure that his obedience and repentance will obtain salvation " MRS. KNOWLES " But divine intimation of acceptance may be made to the soul " JOHNSON " Madam, it may, but I should not think the better of a man who should tell me on his death bed he was sure of salvation A man cannot be sure himself that he has divine intimation of acceptance, much less can he make others sure that he has it " BOSWELL. " Then, Sir, we must be contented to acknowledge that death is a terrible thing " JOHNSON. " Yes, Sir, I have made no approaches to a state which can look on it as not terrible " MRS KNOWLES (seeming to enjoy a pleasing serenity in the persuasion of benignant divine light) " Does not St Paul say, 'I have fought the good fight of faith, I have finished my course, henceforth is laid up for me a crown of life?'" JOHNSON " Yes, Madam, but here was a man inspired, a man who had been converted by supernatural interposition " BOSWELL " In prospect death is dreadful, but in fact we find that people die easy." JOHNSON. " Why, Sir, most people have not *thought* much of the matter, so cannot say much, and it is supposed they die easy. Few believe it certain they are then to die, and those who do, set themselves to behave with resolution, as a man does who is going to be hanged. He is not the less unwilling to be hanged." MISS SEWARD " There is one mode of the fear of death, which is certainly absurd; and that is the dread of annihilation, which is only a pleasing sleep without a dream " JOHNSON " It is neither pleasing nor sleep; it is nothing. Now mere existence is so much better than nothing, that one would rather exist even in pain, than not exist " BOSWELL " If annihilation be nothing, then existing in pain is not a comparative state, but is a positive evil, which I cannot think we should choose. I must be allowed to differ here, and it would lessen the hope of a future state founded on the argument, that the Supreme Being, who is good as he is great, will hereafter compensate for our present sufferings in this life. For if existence, such as we have it here, be comparatively a good, we have no reason to complain, though no more of it should be given to us. But if our only state of existence were in this world, then we might with some reason complain that we are so dissatisfied with our enjoyments compared with our desires " JOHNSON. " The lady confounds annihilation, which is nothing, with the apprehension of it, which is dreadful It is in the apprehension of it that the horror of annihilation consists."

Of John Wesley he said, " He can talk well on any subject."

BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, what has he made of his story of a ghost?"

JOHNSON "Why, Sir, he believes it; but not on sufficient authority. He did not take time enough to examine the girl. It was at Newcastle, where the ghost was said to have appeared to a young woman several times, mentioning something about the right to an old house, advising application to be made to an attorney, which was done, and, at the same time, saying the attorney would do nothing, which proved to be the fact 'This (says John) is a proof that a ghost knows our thoughts.' Now (laughing) it is not necessary to know our thoughts to tell that an attorney will sometimes do nothing. Charles Wesley, who is a more stationary man, does not believe the story. I am sorry that John did not take more pains to inquire into the evidence for it." MISS SEWARD (with an incredulous smile) "What, Sir! about a ghost?" JOHNSON (with solemn vehemence) "Yes, Madam this is a question which, after five thousand years, is yet undecided, a question, whether in theology or philosophy, one of the most important that can come before the human understanding."

Mrs Knowles mentioned, as a proselyte to Quakerism, Miss ———,¹ a young lady well known to Dr. Johnson, for whom he had shewn much affection, while she ever had, and still retained, a great respect for him. Mrs. Knowles at the same time took an opportunity of letting him know "that the amiable young creature was sorry at finding that he was offended at her leaving the Church of England and embracing a simpler faith," and, in the gentlest and most persuasive manner, solicited his kind indulgence for what was sincerely a matter of conscience. JOHNSON (frowning very angrily) "Madam, she is an odious wench. She could not have any proper conviction that it was her duty to change her religion, which is the most important of all subjects, and should be studied with all care, and with all the helps we can get. She knew no more of the Church which she left, and that which she embraced, than she did of the difference between the Copernican and Ptolemaick systems." MRS. KNOWLES. "She had the New Testament before her." JOHNSON "Madam, she could not understand the New Testament, the most difficult book in the world, for which the study of a life is required." MRS. KNOWLES "It is clear as to essentials." JOHNSON. "But not as to controversial points. The heathens were easily converted, because they had nothing to give up, but we ought not, without very strong conviction indeed, to desert the religion in which we have been educated. That is the religion

¹ "Jenny Harry," the daughter of a West Indian planter

given you, the religion in which it may be said Providence has placed you. If you live conscientiously in that religion, you may be safe. But error is dangerous indeed, if you err when you choose a religion for yourself." MRS KNOWLES. "Must we then go by implicit faith?" JOHNSON. "Why, Madam, the greatest part of our knowledge is implicit faith; and as to religion, have we heard all that a disciple of Confucius, all that a Mahometan can say for himself?" He then rose again into passion, and attacked the young proselyte in the severest terms of reproach, so that both the ladies seemed to be much shocked.¹

Cor et Ad—Line 10. On "shocked" put the following note—"Mrs Knowles, not satisfied with the tame of her needlework, the '*subtle pictures*' mentioned by Johnson, in which she has indeed displayed much dexterity, nay, with the fame of reasoning better than women generally do, as I have fairly shewn her to have done, communicated to me a Dialogue of considerable length, which after many years had elapsed, she wrote down as having passed between Dr Johnson and her at this interview. As I had not the least recollection of it, and did not find the smallest trace of it in my *Record* taken at the time, I could not in consistency with my firm regard to authenticity, insert it in my work. It has however, been published in '*The Gentleman's Magazine*' for June 1791. It chiefly relates to the principles of the sect called *Quakers*, and no doubt the lady appears to have greatly the advantage of Dr Johnson in argument as well as expression. From what I have now stated, and from the internal evidence of the paper itself, any one who may have the curiosity to peruse it, will judge whether it was wrong in me to reject it, however willing to gratify Mrs Knowles."

¹ Mrs Seward wrote another version of this interview. "Jenny Harry weeps at the consciousness that thou wilt not speak to her." He said, "I hate the wench, and shall ever hate her. I hate all impudence of a chit, apostasy I nauseate." Mrs ——— urged how grieved the girl was to have offended Johnson. He then retorted, why had she not come to him for advice? Mrs Knowles replied, that she had been prompted by the ingenuous homage of a devout heart. "The homage of a fool's head, you should say," said Johnson. She then declared that the girl and Johnson would, it was to be hoped, meet in a blessed eternity. To which the Doctor "Madam, I am not fond of *meeting fools anywhere*." The loud and angry tone in which he thundered out these replies to his calm able antagonist frightened us all, except Mrs Knowles, who gently, not sarcastically, smiled at his injustice. Mr Boswell whispered to me, "I never saw this lion so chafed before." Though the Quaker lady appears to advantage in Boswell's report, she fancied that "she was illiberally used by the late journalist of Johnson," (so she wrote to Mr Nicholls). She accordingly pub-

lished her version. It will be seen how immeasurably inferior the reports of both ladies are to that of "the *late journalist*." They, however, are valuable as proving, in the most satisfactory way, the unique and inimitable gift of Boswell, his cultivated power of selecting the essence, and of rejecting all that did not illustrate character. The inaccuracy of their report is, moreover, shown in their substituting the Catholic for the Mahomedan religion as the illustration of Johnson's argument, and in confusing its various portions. Mrs Knowles was annoyed that the sympathy she won from the company was not put prominently forward. Here is her version—"When Mrs Knowles insisted on being heard in her defence, Dr J. (*much disturbed at this unexpected challenge*) said, 'You are a woman, and I give you quarter.' Mrs K. 'I will not take quarter, there is no sex in souls, and in the present cause I fear not even Dr Johnson himself.' ('Bravo' was repeated by the company, and silence ensued). When she happily ridiculed the notion of calling the state 'an entity with a conscience,' the company laughed with her, and the Doctor grew

We remained together till it was pretty late. Notwithstanding occasional explosions of violence, we were all delighted upon the whole with Johnson. I compared him at this time to a warm West-Indian climate, where you have a bright sun, quick vegetation, luxuriant foliage, luscious fruits, but where the same heat sometimes produces thunder, lightening, and earthquakes in a terrible degree.

April 17, being Good-Friday, I waited on Johnson as usual. I observed at breakfast that although it was a part of his abstemious discipline on this most solemn fast, to take no milk in his tea, yet when Mrs Desmoulins inadvertently poured it in, he did not reject it. I talked of the strange indecision of mind, and imbecility in the common occurrences of life, which we may observe in some people. JOHNSON "Why, Sir, I am in the habit of getting others to do things for me." BOSWELL. "What, Sir! have you that weakness?" JOHNSON "Yes, Sir. But I always think afterwards I should have done better for myself."

I told him that at a gentleman's house where there was thought to be such extravagance or bad management, that he was living much beyond his income, his lady had objected to the cutting of a pickled mango, and that I had taken an opportunity to ask the price of it, and found it was only two shillings; so here was a very poor saving. JOHNSON. "Sir, that is the blundering œconomy of a narrow understanding. It is stopping one hole in a sieve."

I expressed some inclination to publish an account of my *Travels* upon the continent of Europe, for which I had a variety of materials collected. JOHNSON "I do not say, Sir, you may not publish your travels, but I give you my opinion, that you would lessen yourself by it. What can you tell of countries so well known as those upon the continent of Europe, which you have visited?" BOSWELL. "But I can give an entertaining narrative, with many incidents, anecdotes, *jeu d'esprit*, and remarks, so as to make very pleasant reading." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, most modern travellers in Europe who have published their travels, have been laughed at. I would not have you added to the number.^a The world is now not con-

^a I believe, however, I shall follow my own opinion, for the world has shewn a very flattering partiality to my writings, on many occasions.

more angry, and assailed the Quakers, being indignant at the space of time the gentlemen allowed his antagonist to make her defence. 'The stroke as to "meeting fools," with which he closed the discussion, was,' she adds, 'so plea-

santly received, that the Doctor joined us to laugh. He took his coffee, and became for the remainder of the evening very cheerful and entertaining."

¹ This "partiality" is proved by the numerous editions issued of Mr Bos-

tented to be merely entertained by a traveller's narrative; they want to learn something. Now some of my friends asked me why I did not give some account of my travels in France. The reason is plain, intelligent readers had seen more of France than I had. You might have liked my Travels in France, and THE CLUB might have liked them, but upon the whole there would have been more ridicule than good produced by them." BOSWELL "I cannot agree with you, Sir. People would like to read what you say of any thing. Suppose a face has been painted by fifty painters before, still we love to see it done by Sir Joshua." JOHNSON. "True, Sir, but Sir Joshua cannot paint a face when he has not time to look on it." BOSWELL. "Sir, a sketch of any sort by him is valuable. And, Sir, to talk to you in your own style (raising my voice, and shaking my head,) you *should* have given us your Travels in France. I am *sure* I am right, and *there's an end on't*."

I said to him that it was certainly true as my friend Dempster had observed in his letter to me upon the subject, that a great part of what was in his "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland," had been in his mind before he left London. JOHNSON. "Why, yes, Sir, the topics were, and books of travels will be good in proportion to what a man has previously in his mind, his knowing what to observe, his power of contrasting one mode of life with another. As the Spanish proverb says, 'He, who would bring home the wealth of the Indies, must carry the wealth of the Indies with him.' So it is in travelling, a man must carry knowledge with him if he would bring home knowledge." BOSWELL "The proverb, I suppose, Sir, means, he must carry a large stock with him to trade with." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir."

It was a delightful day as we walked to St. Clement's church, I again remarked that Fleet street was the most cheerful scene in the world. "Fleet-street (said I,) is in my mind more delightful than Tempé." JOHNSON. "Aye, Sir; but let it be compared with Mull."

well's lighter works. His account of Corsica, as we have seen, passed through several editions as did also his two 'Letters to the people of Scotland' — the first, written in 1783, in reference to the India Bill, the second, on a proposal to reduce the number of Scotch judges. Of the latter, he says that "it was so persuasive and forcible that many of the counties of North Britain assembled and entered into such resolutions against the scheme that it was given up." — (*Memoir*, in *Literary Mag.*) Lord Cockburn ("Me-

morials," second edition) quotes a characteristic passage from a third letter, to Lord Brinkfield, who succeeded Lord Auchinleck on the bench, but which I have not been able to find elsewhere. It has not been noticed that Mr Boswell was attending Lord Kaimes, taking down his recollections and stories, with a view to a memoir and some of these fragments are quoted in the "Life and Works of Lord Kaimes." These are quoted from the "Boswell MS.," after which fruitless inquiries have often been made.

There was a very numerous congregation to-day at St. Clement's church, which Dr. Johnson said he observed with pleasure

And now I am to give a pretty full account of one of the most curious incidents in Johnson's life, of which he himself has made the following minute on this day: "In my return from church, I was accosted by Edwards, an old fellow-collegian, who had not seen me since 1729. He knew me, and asked if I remembered one Edwards; I did not at first recollect the name, but gradually as we walked along, recovered it, and told him a conversation that had passed at an alehouse between us. My purpose is to continue our acquaintance" *

It was in Butcher-row that this meeting happened. Mr Edwards, who was a decent-looking elderly man in grey clothes, and a wig of many curls, accosted Johnson with familiar confidence, knowing who he was, while Johnson returned his salutation with a courteous formality, as to a stranger. But as soon as Edwards had brought to his recollection their having been at Pembroke-College together nine-and-thirty years ago, he seemed much pleased, asked where he lived, and said he should be glad to see him in Bolt-Court. EDWARDS. "Ah, Sir! we are old men now." JOHNSON (who never liked to think of being old) "Don't let us discourage one another." EDWARDS. "Why Doctor you look stout and hearty, I am happy to see you so; for the news-papers told us you were very ill." JOHNSON. "Aye, Sir, they are always telling lies of us old fellows."

Wishing to be present at more of so singular a conversation as that between two fellow collegians, who had lived near forty years in London without ever having chanced to meet, I whispered to Mr Edwards that Dr. Johnson was going home, and that he had better accompany him now. So Edwards walked along with us, I eagerly assisting to keep up the conversation. Mr. Edwards informed Dr Johnson that he had practised long as a solicitor in Chancery, but that he now lived in the country upon a little farm about sixty acres, just by Stevenage in Hertfordshire, and that he came to London (to Barnard's Inn, No 6,) generally twice a week. Johnson appearing to be in a reverie, Mr. Edwards addressed himself to me, and expatiated on the pleasure of living in the country. BOSWELL. "I have no notion of this, Sir. What you have to entertain you, is, I think, exhausted in half an hour." EDWARDS. "What! don't you love to have hope realised? I see my grass, and my corn, and my trees growing. Now, for instance, I am

* Prayers and Meditations, p 164.

curious to see if this frost has not nipped my fruit trees " JOHN-
SON. (who we did not imagine was attending) "You find, Sir,
you have fears as well as hopes"—So well did he see the whole,
when another saw but the half of a subject

When we got to Dr Johnson's house, and were seated in his
library, the dialogue went on admirably. EDWARDS. "Sir, I re-
member you would not let us say *prodigious* at College. For even
then, Sir, (turning to me,) he was delicate in language, and we
all feared him " * JOHNSON (to Edwards) "From your having
practised the law long, Sir, I presume you must be rich " EDWARDS.
"No, Sir, I got a good deal of money, but I had a number of poor
relations to whom I gave a great part of it." JOHNSON "Sir, you
have been rich in the most valuable sense of the word." EDWARDS.
"But I shall not die rich." JOHNSON. "Nay, sure, Sir, it is better
to *live* rich than to *die* rich " EDWARDS "I wish I had continued
at College " JOHNSON "Why do you wish that, Sir?" EDWARDS.
"Because I think I should have had a much easier life than mine
has been. I should have been a parson, and had a good living,
like Bloxam and several others, and lived comfortably " JOHNSON
"Sir, the life of a parson, of a conscientious clergyman, is not easy.
I have always considered a clergyman as the father of a larger
family than he is able to maintain. I would rather have Chancery
suits upon my hands than the cure of souls. No, Sir, I do not
envy a clergyman's life as an easy life, nor do I envy the clergy-
man who makes it an easy life"—Here taking himself up all of
a sudden, he exclaimed, "O' Mr Edwards! I'll convince you that
I recollect you. Do you remember our drinking together at an
alehouse near Pembroke gate. At that time you told me of the
Eton boy, who, when verses on our SAVIOUR's turning water into
wine were prescribed as an exercise, brought up a single line,
which was highly admired.

*'Vidit et erubuit lymphæ pudica DEUM.'*¹

and I told you of another fine line in 'Camden's Remains,' an
eulogy upon one of our Kings, who was succeeded by his son,
a prince of equal merit:

'Mina cano, Sol occubuit, nox nulla secuta est' "

* Johnson said to me afterwards, "Sir, they respected me for my literature, and
yet it was not great but by comparison. Sir, it is amazing how little literature there
is in the world."

¹ This famous line occurs in an epigram by Crashaw.

EDWARDS. "You are a philosopher, Dr Johnson I have tried too in my time to be a philosopher; but, I don't know how, cheerfulness was always breaking in"—Mr. Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Malone, and, indeed, all the eminent men to whom I have mentioned this, have thought it an exquisite trait of character The truth is, that philosophy, like religion, is too generally supposed to be hard and severe, at least so grave as to exclude all gaiety

EDWARDS "I have been twice married, Doctor You, I suppose, have never known what it was to have a wife" JOHNSON "Sir, I have known what it was to have a wife, and (in a solemn tender faltering tone) I have known what it was to *lose a wife*—It had almost broke my heart"

EDWARDS "How do you live, Sir? For my part, I must have my regular meals, and a glass of good wine I find I require it" JOHNSON. "I now drink no wine, Sir Early in life I drank wine. for many years I drank none I then for some years drank a great deal" EDWARDS "Some hogsheads, I warrant you" JOHNSON "I then had a severe illness, and left it off, and I have never begun it again I never felt any difference upon myself from eating one thing rather than another, nor from one kind of weather rather than another There are people, I believe, who feel a difference, but I am not one of them And as to regular meals, I have fasted from the Sunday's dinner to the Tuesday's dinner, without any inconvenience I believe it is best to eat just as one is hungry, but a man who is in business, or a man who has a family, must have stated meals I am a straggler. I may leave this town and go to Grand Cairo, without being missed here or observed there" EDWARDS. "Don't you eat supper, Sir?" JOHNSON "No, Sir." EDWARDS. "For my part now, I consider supper as a turnpike through which one must pass, in order to get to bed"

JOHNSON "You are a lawyer, Mr Edwards Lawyers know life practically. A bookish man should always have them to converse with They have what he wants" EDWARDS "I am grown old: I am sixty-five" JOHNSON "I shall be sixty-eight next birth-day Come, Sir, drink water, and put in for a hundred"

Mr Edwards mentioned a gentleman who had left his whole fortune to Pembroke College.¹ JOHNSON. "Whether to leave

¹ I am not absolutely sure but this was my own suggestion, though it is truly in the character of Edwards

¹ The Rev Mr Phipps, as Dr Hall informed Mr. Croker

one's whole fortune to a College be right, must depend upon circumstances. I would leave the interest of the fortune I bequeathed to a College to my relations or my friends, for their lives. It is the same thing to a College, which is a permanent society, whether it gets the money now or twenty years hence, and I would wish to make my relations or friends feel the benefit of it."

This interview confirmed my opinion of Johnson's most humane and benevolent heart. His cordial and placid behaviour to an old fellow-collegian, a man so different from himself, and his telling him that he would go down to his farm and visit him, shewed a kindness of disposition very rare at an advanced age. He observed, "how wonderful it was that they had both been in London almost forty years, without having ever once met, and both walkers in the street too!" Mr. Edwards, when going away, again recurred to his consciousness of senility, and looking full in Johnson's face, said to him, "You'll find in Dr. Young,

'O my coevals' remnants of yourselves."

Johnson did not relish this at all; but shook his head with impatience. Edwards walked off, seemingly highly pleased with the honour of having been thus noticed by Dr Johnson. When he was gone, I said to Johnson, that I thought him but a weak man. JOHNSON "Why, yes, Sir. Here is a man who has passed through life without experience yet I would rather have him with me than a more sensible man who will not talk readily. This man is always willing to say what he has to say." Yet Dr. Johnson had himself by no means that willingness which he praised so much, and I think so justly; for who has not felt the painful effect of the dreary void, when there is a total silence in a company for any length of time, or, which is as bad, or perhaps worse, when the conversation is with difficulty kept up by a perpetual effort?

Johnson once observed to me, "Tom Tyers described me the best. 'Sir, (said he,) you are like a ghost. you never speak till you are spoken to.'"

The gentleman whom he thus familiarly mentioned was Mr Thomas Tyers, son of Mr. Jonathan Tyers, the founder of that excellent place of publick amusement, Vauxhall Gardens, which must ever be an estate to its proprietor, as it is peculiarly adapted to the taste of the English nation, there being a mixture of curious shew—gay exhibition—musick, vocal and instrumental, not too refined for the general ear—for all which only a shilling is paid—and,

Cor et Ad—Last line On "paid" put the following note —"In summer, 1792,

though last not least, good eating and drinking for those who choose to purchase that regale Mr. Thomas Tyers was bred to the law ; but having a handsome fortune, vivacity of temper, and eccentricity of mind, he could not confine himself to the regularity of practice. He therefore ran about the world with a pleasant carelessness, amusing every body by his desultory conversation. He abounded in anecdote, but was not sufficiently attentive to accuracy I therefore cannot venture to avail myself much of a biographical sketch of Johnson which he published, being one among the various persons ambitious of appending their names to that of my illustrious friend That sketch is, however, an entertaining little collection of fragments Those which he published of Pope and Addison are of higher merit, but his fame must chiefly rest upon his " Political Conferences," in which he introduces several eminent persons delivering their sentiments in the way of dialogue, and discovers a considerable share of learning, various knowledge, and discernment of character This much may I be allowed to say of a man who was exceedingly obliging to me, and who lived with Dr Johnson in as easy a manner as almost any of his very numerous acquaintance.

Mr Edwards had said to me aside, that Dr Johnson should have been of a profession I repeated the remark to Johnson that I might have his own thoughts on the subject JOHNSON " Sir, it *would* have been better that I had been of a profession I ought to have been a lawyer " BOSWELL. " I do not think, Sir, it would have been better, for we should not have had the English Dictionary." JOHNSON " But you would have had Reports " BOSWELL. " Aye; but there would not have been another who could have written the Dictionary. There have been many very good Judges. Suppose you had been Lord Chancellor, you would have delivered opinions with more extent of mind, and in a more ornamented manner, than perhaps any Chancellor ever did, or ever will do. But, I believe, causes have been as judiciously decided as you could have done " JOHNSON. " Yes, Sir. Property has been as well settled "

Johnson, however, had a noble ambition floating in his mind, and had, undoubtedly, often speculated on the possibility of his super-eminent powers being rewarded in this great and liberal country by the highest honours of the state Sir William Scott informs me, that upon the death of the late Lord Lichfield, who was Chancellor

additional and more expensive decorations having been introduced, the price of admission was raised to two shillings I cannot approve of this The company may be more select, but a number of the honest commonalty are, I fear, excluded from sharing in elegant and innocent entertainment An attempt to abolish the one-shilling gallery at the playhouse has been very properly counteracted "

of the University of Oxford, he said to Johnson, "What a pity it is, Sir, that you did not follow the profession of the law. You might have been Lord Chancellor of Great-Britain, and attained to the dignity of the peerage, and now that the title of Lichfield, your native city, is extinct, you might have had it." Johnson, upon this, seemed much agitated, and, in an angry tone, exclaimed, "Why will you vex me by suggesting this, when it is too late?"

But he did not repine at the prosperity of others. The late Dr. Thomas Leland told Mr. Courtenay, that when Mr. Edmund Burke shewed Johnson his fine house and lands near Beaconsfield, Johnson coolly said, "*Non equidem invidéo, miror magis.*"

Yet no man had a higher notion of the dignity of literature than Johnson, or was more determined in maintaining the respect which he justly considered as due to it. Of this, besides the general tenor of his conduct in society, some characteristic instances may be mentioned.

He told Sir Joshua Reynolds, that once when he dined in a numerous company of booksellers, where the room being small, the head of the table, at which he sat, was almost close to the fire, he

Cor. et Ad.—LINE II. On "*magis*" put the following note—"I am not entirely without suspicion that Johnson may have felt a little momentary envy, for no man loved the good things of this life better than he did, and he could not but be conscious that he deserved a much larger share of them, than he ever had. I attempted in a newspaper to comment on the above passage in the manner of W. Burton, who must be allowed to have shown uncommon ingenuity, in giving to my author's text whatever meaning he chose it should carry. As this imitation may annoy my readers, I shall here introduce it."

"No saying of DR. JOHNSON'S has been more misunderstood than his applying to MR. BURKE when he first saw him at his fine place at Beaconsfield, *Non equidem invidéo, miror magis*. These two celebrated men had been friends for many years, before Mr. Burke entered on his parliamentary career. They were both writers, both members of THE LITERARY CLUB, when, therefore, Dr. Johnson saw Mr. Burke in a situation so much more splendid than that to which he himself had attained, he did not mean to express that he thought it a disproportionate prosperity, but while he, as a philosopher, asserted an exemption from envy, *non equidem invidéo*, he went on in the words of the poet, *miror magis*, thereby signifying, either that he was occupied in admiring what he was glad to see, or, perhaps, that considering the general lot of men of superior abilities, he wondered, that Fortune, who is represented as blind, should, in this instance, have been so just."¹

¹ This was probably from one of Mr. Boswell's numerous contributions to the *London Chronicle*, which were signed "J. B.," and sometimes with his name in full. These were much in the style of the average "Constant Reader," and he sometimes condescended to engage in controversy with "Senex," "Patricius," and such correspondents. To the latter he wrote, "To talk of my unavoidable occupation may seem affected, but the

truth is, that a moderate share of business seems a heavy load to one who has spent many of his years in a dissipated variety.

"Patricius" is not only liberal, but condescending. He does me the honour to talk of 'my better judgement.' I am much obliged to him. I have not the least guess who he is, but I hope he and I shall yet drink a generous glass to friendship, to the brave Corsicans, and to their illustrious chief."

persevered in suffering a great deal of inconvenience from the heat, rather than quit his place, and let one of them sit above him

Goldsmith, in his diverting simplicity, complained one day, in a mixed company, of Lord Camden "I met him (said he) at Lord Clare's house in the country, and he took no more notice of me than if I had been an ordinary man" The company having laughed heartily, Johnson stood forth in defence of his friend. "Nay, gentlemen, (said he,) Dr. Goldsmith is in the right A nobleman ought to have made up to such a man as Goldsmith, and I think it is much against Lord Camden that he neglected him"

Nor could he patiently endure to hear that such respect as he thought due only to higher intellectual qualities, should be bestowed on men of slighter, though perhaps more amusing talents. I told him, that one morning, when I went to breakfast with Garrick, who was very vain of his intimacy with Lord Camden, he accosted me thus—"Pray now, did you?—did you meet a little lawyer turning the corner, eh?"—"No, Sir (said I). Pray what do you mean by the question?"—"Why, (replied Garrick, with an affected indifference, yet as if standing on tip-toe,) Lord Camden has this moment left me We have had a long walk together" JOHNSON "Well, Sir, Garrick talked very properly Lord Camden *was* a little lawyer to be associated so familiarly with a player"¹

Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, with great truth, that Johnson considered Garrick to be as it were his *property* He would allow no man either to blame or to praise Garrick in his presence, without contradicting him²

Having fallen into a very serious frame, in which mutual expressions of kindness passed between us, such as would be thought too vain in me to repeat, I talked with regret of the sad inevitable certainty that one of us must survive the other JOHNSON "Yes, Sir, that is an affecting consideration I remember Swift, in one of his letters to Pope, says, 'I intend to come over, that we may meet once more, and when we must part, it is what happens to all human beings'" BOSWELL "The hope that we shall see our departed friends again must support the mind" JOHNSON "Why yes, Sir" BOSWELL. "There is a strange unwillingness to part with life, independent of serious fears as to futurity A reverend friend of ours (naming him) tells me, that he feels an uneasiness at the thoughts of leaving his house, his study, his books." JOHNSON.

¹ The charming letters of Camden, preserved in the "Garrick Correspondence," present a different idea of the "little lawyer"

² Sir Joshua illustrated this by the two well-known dialogues composed in the manner of Johnson

"This is foolish in *****¹ A man need not be uneasy on these grounds, for, as he will retain his consciousness, he may say with the philosopher, *Omnia mea mecum porto.*" BOSWELL. "True, Sir: we may carry our books in our head, but still there is something painful in the thought of leaving for ever what has given us pleasure I remember many years ago, when my imagination was warm, and I happened to be in a melancholy mood, it distressed me to think of going into a state of being in which Shakspeare's poetry did not exist A lady whom I then much admired, a very amiable woman, humoured my fancy, and relieved me by saying, 'The first thing you will meet in the other world, will be an elegant copy of Shakspeare's works presented to you.'" Dr. Johnson smiled benignantly at this, and did not appear to disapprove of the notion

We went to St Clement's church again in the afternoon, and then returned and drank tea and coffee in Mrs. Williams's room; Mrs. Desmoulins doing the honours of the tea table I observed that he would not even look at a proof sheet of his "Life of Waller" on Good-Friday

Mr Allen, the printer, brought a book on agriculture, which was printed, and was soon to be published It was a very strange performance, the authour having mixed in it his own thoughts upon various topics, along with his remarks on ploughing, sowing, and other farming operations He seemed to be an absurd profane fellow, and had introduced in his book many sneers at religion, with equal ignorance and conceit Dr Johnson permitted me to read some passages aloud One was, that he resolved to work on Sunday, and did work, but he owned he felt *some* weak compunction, and he had this very curious reflection — "I was born in the wilds of Christianity, and the briars and thorns still hang about me" Dr. Johnson could not help laughing at this ridiculous image, yet was very angry at the fellow's impiety. "However, (said he,) the Reviewers will make him hang himself" He however observed, "that formerly there might have been a dispensation obtained for working on Sunday in the time of harvest." Indeed in ritual observances, were all the ministers of religion what they should be, and what many of them are, such a power might be wisely and safely lodged with the Church.

On Saturday, April 14, I drank tea with him He praised the late Mr Duncombe, of Canterbury, as a pleasing man. "He used

¹ The number of stars shows that Dr Percy is intended It is interesting to know that when the bishop became

totally blind he bore the infliction with infinite resignation

to come to me. I did not seek much after *him*. Indeed I never sought much after any body " BOSWELL " Lord Orrery, I suppose " JOHNSON " No, Sir, I never went to him but when he sent for me " BOSWELL. " Richardson ? " JOHNSON " Yes, Sir But I sought after George Psalmanazar the most I used to go and sit with him at an alehouse in the city "

I am happy to mention another instance which I discovered of his *seeking after* a man of merit. Soon after the Honourable Daines Barrington had published his excellent " Observations on the Statutes," Johnson waited on that worthy and learned gentleman, and, having told him his name courteously said, " I have read your book, Sir, with great pleasure, and wish to be better known to you " Thus began an acquaintance, which was continued with mutual regard as long as Johnson lived

Talking of a recent seditious delinquent,¹ he said, " They should set him in the pillory, that he may be punished in a way that would disgrace him " I observed, that the pillory does not always disgrace. And I mentioned an instance of a gentleman who I thought was not dishonoured by it² JOHNSON " Aye, but he was, Sir He could not mouth and strut as he used to do, after having been there. People are not very willing to ask a man to their tables who has stood in the pillory."

The gentleman who had dined with us at Dr Percy's^a came in Johnson attacked the Americans with intemperate vehemence of abuse I said something in their favour, and added, that I was always sorry when he talked on that subject This, it seems, exasperated him, though he said nothing at the time The cloud was charged with sulphureous vapour, which was afterwards to burst in thunder—We talked of a gentleman who was running out his fortune in London, and I said " We must get him out of it. All his friends must quarrel with him, and that will soon drive him away " JOHNSON. " Nay, Sir, we'll send *you* to him If your company does not drive a man out of his house, nothing will." This was a horrible shock, for which there was no visible cause. I afterwards asked him why he had said so harsh a thing JOHNSON. " Because, Sir, you had made me angry about the Americans." BOSWELL " But why did not you take your revenge directly ? " JOHNSON. (smiling) " Because, Sir, I had nothing ready. A man

^a See p. 286 of this Volume

¹ Horne Tooke

also believes.

² Probably Shcbbear, as Mr Croker

cannot strike till he has his weapons" This was a candid and pleasant confession

He showed me to night his drawing room, very genteelly fitted up, and said, "Mrs Thrale sneered when I talked of my having asked you and your lady to live at my house I was obliged to tell her, that you would be in as respectable a situation in my house as in hers Sir, the insolence of wealth will creep out." BOSWELL "She has a little both of the insolence of wealth, and the conceit of parts" JOHNSON "The insolence of wealth is a wretched thing, but the conceit of parts has some foundation. To be sure it should not be But who is without it?" BOSWELL "Yourself, Sir" JOHNSON "Why I play no tricks I lay no traps" BOSWELL "No, Sir You are six feet high, and you only do not stoop"

We talked of the numbers of people that sometimes have composed the household of great families I mentioned that there were a hundred in the family of the present Earl of Eglintoune's father. Dr Johnson seeming to doubt it, I began to enumerate "Let us see my Lord and my lady two JOHNSON "Nay, Sir, if you are to count by twos, you may be long enough" BOSWELL "Well, but now I add two sons and seven daughters, and a servant for each, that will make twenty, so we have the fifth part already." JOHNSON "Very true You get at twenty pretty readily, but you will not so easily get further on We grow to five feet pretty readily, but it is not so easy to grow to seven"

On Sunday, April 19, being Laster day, after the solemnities of the festival in St Paul's church, I visited him, but could not stay to dinner. I expressed a wish to have the arguments for Christianity always in readiness, that my religious faith might be as firm and clear as any proposition whatever, so that I need not be under the least uneasiness when it should be attacked JOHNSON "Sir, you cannot answer all objections You have demonstration for a First Cause you see he must be good as well as powerful, because there is nothing to make him otherwise, and goodness of itself is preferable Yet you have against this, what is very certain, the unhappiness of human life This, however, gives us reason to hope for a future state of compensation, that there may be a perfect system But of that we were not sure till we had a positive revelation." I told him, that his "Rasselas" had often made me unhappy; for it represented the misery of human life so well, and so convincingly to a thinking mind, that if at any time the impression wore off and I felt myself easy, I began to suspect some delusion

On Monday, April 20, I found him at home in the morning. We

talked of a gentleman who we apprehended was gradually involving his circumstances by bad management JOHNSON "Wasting a fortune is evaporation by a thousand imperceptible means If it were a stream, they'd stop it. You must speak to him It is really miserable Were he a gamester, it could be said he had hopes of winning. Were he a bankrupt in trade, he might have grown rich, but he has neither spirit to spend, nor resolution to spare He does not spend fast enough to have pleasure from it. He has the crime of prodigality, and the wretchedness of parsimony. If a man is killed in a duel, he is killed as many a one has been killed, but it is a sad thing for a man to lie down and die, to bleed to death, because he has not fortitude enough to sear the wound, or even to stitch it up " I cannot but pause a moment to admire the fecundity of fancy, and choice of language, which in this instance, and, indeed, on almost all occasions, he displayed It was well observed by Dr. Percy, now Bishop of Dromore, "The conversation of Johnson is strong and clear, and may be compared to an antique statue, where every vein and muscle is distinct and bold Ordinary conversation resembles an inferior cast "

On Saturday, April 25, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, with the learned Dr. Musgrave, Counsellor Leland of Ireland, son to the historian, Mrs Cholmondeley, and some more ladies "The Project," a new poem, was read to the company by Dr. Musgrave JOHNSON "Sir, it has no power Were it not for the well-known names with which it is filled, it would be nothing: the names carry the poet, not the poet the names " MUSGRAVE "A temporary poem always entertains us " JOHNSON "So does an account of the criminals hanged yesterday entertain us "

He proceeded — "Demosthenes Taylor, as he was called, (that is, the translator of Demosthenes,) was the most silent man, the merest statue of a man that I have ever seen. I once dined in company with him, and all he said during the whole time was no more than *Richard* How a man should say only *Richard*, it is not easy to imagine But it was thus Dr. Douglas was talking of Dr. Zachary Grey, and ascribing to him something that was written by Dr. Richard Grey So to correct him, Taylor said, (imitating his affected sententious emphasis and nod,) '*Richard* '"

Second Edition — Line 30 "Editor" put for "translator" ¹

¹ Dr Farmer "wondered how a Scotch advocate should be so perfectly uninformed as to know nothing of the best edition and best modern editor of Demosthenes " "This," says a correspon-

dent of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "I sent to Nicholls, and he returned Boswell's note of his readiness to correct " The correction, we see, has been made

Mrs Cholmondeley, in a high flow of spirits,¹ exhibited some lively sallies of hyperbolic compliment to Johnson, with whom she had been long acquainted, and was very easy. He was quick in catching the *manner* of the moment, and answered her somewhat in the style of the hero of a romance, "Madam, you crown me with unfading laurels."

I happened, I know not how, to say that a pamphlet meant a prose piece JOHNSON "No, Sir A few sheets of poetry unbound are a pamphlet, as much as a few sheets of prose MUSGRAVE. "A pamphlet may be understood to mean a poetical piece, in Westminster Hall, that is in formal language; but in common language it is understood to mean prose" JOHNSON. (and here was one of the many instances of his knowing clearly and telling exactly how a thing is) "A pamphlet is understood in common language to mean prose, only from this, that there is so much more prose written than poetry, as when we say a *book*, prose is understood for the same reason, though a book may as well be in poetry as in prose We understand what is most general, and we name what is less frequent"

We talked of a certain lady's verses on Ireland MISS REYNOLDS. "Have you seen them, Sir?" JOHNSON. "No, Madam I have seen a translation from Horace, by one of her daughters She shewed it me" MISS REYNOLDS "And how was it, Sir?" JOHNSON "Why very well for a young Miss's verses,—that is to say, compared with excellence, nothing, but, very well, for the person who wrote them I am vexed at being shewn verses in that manner" MISS REYNOLDS "But if they should be good, why not give them hearty praise?" JOHNSON "Why, Madam, because I have not then got the better of my bad humour from having been shewn them You must consider Madam, before hand they may be bad as well as good. Nobody has a right to put another under such a difficulty, that he must either hurt the person by telling the truth, or hurt himself by telling what is not true" BOSWELL "A man often shews his writings to people of eminence, to obtain from them, either from their good nature, or from their not being able to tell the truth firmly, a commendation, of which he may afterwards avail himself" JOHNSON. "Very true, Sir Therefore a man, who is asked by an authour what he thinks of his work, is put to the torture, and is not obliged to speak the truth, so that what he says

¹ For a pleasant sketch of Mrs Cholmondeley in a 'high flow of spirits' see Mrs Lefanu's *Life of Mrs Sheridan* She had been brought up in a

convent by her sister, the now celebrated Peg Woffington The family of the Bullinghams in Louth, Ireland, is descended from her

is not to be considered as his opinion, yet he has said it, and cannot retract it, and this authour, when mankind are hunting him with a cannister at his tail, can say, 'I would not have published, had not Johnson, or Reynolds, or Musgrave, or some other good judge commended the work' Yet I consider it as a very difficult question in conscience, whether one should advise a man not to publish a work, if profit be his object, for the man may say, 'Had it not been for you, I should have had the money' Now you cannot be sure, for you have only your own opinion, and the publick may think very differently" SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS "You must upon such an occasion have two judgements, one as to the real value of the work, the other as to what may please the general taste at the time." JOHNSON "But you can be *sure* of neither, and therefore I should scruple much to give a suppressive vote Both Goldsmith's comedies were once refused, his first by Garrick, his second by Colman, who was prevailed on at last by much solicitation, nay, a kind of force, to bring it on His 'Vicar of Wakefield' I myself did not think would have had much success It was written and sold to a bookseller before his 'Traveller,' but published after, so little expectation had the bookseller from it Had it been sold after 'The Traveller,' he might have had twice as much money for it, though sixty guineas was no mean price The bookseller had the advantage of Goldsmith's reputation from 'The Traveller' in the sale, though he had it not in selling the copy." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. "The Beggars Opera affords a proof how strangely people will differ in opinion about a literary performance. Burke thinks it has no merit" JOHNSON. "It was refused by one of the houses, but I should have thought it would succeed, not from any great excellence in the writing, but from the novelty, and the general spirit and gaiety of the piece, which keeps the audience always attentive, and dismisses them in good humour."

We went to the drawing-room, where was a considerable increase of company Several of us got round Dr Johnson, and complained that he would not give us an exact catalogue of his works, that there might be a complete edition He smiled, and evaded our intreaties That he intended to do it I have no doubt, because I have heard him say so, and I have in my possession an imperfect list, fairly written out, which he entitles *Historia Studiorum*. I once got from one of his friends a list, which there was pretty good reason to suppose was accurate, for it was written down in his presence by this friend, who enumerated each article aloud, and had some of them mentioned to him by Mr Levett, in concert with whom it was made out, and Johnson, who heard all this, did not

contradict it. But when I shewed a copy of this list to him, and mentioned the evidence for its exactness, he laughed, and said, "I was willing to let them go on as they pleased, and never interfered" Upon which I read it to him, article by article, and got him positively to own or refuse, and then having obtained certainty so far, I got some other articles confirmed by him directly, and afterwards, from time to time, made additions under his sanction

His friend Edward Cave having been mentioned, he told us, "Cave used to sell ten thousand of 'The Gentleman's Magazine;' yet such was then his minute attention and anxiety that the sale should not feel the smallest diminution, that he would name a particular person who he heard had talked of leaving off the magazine, and would say, 'Let us have something good next month'"

It was observed, that avarice was inherent in some dispositions
JOHNSON "No man was born a miser, because no man was born to possession. Every man is born *cupidus*—desirous of getting, but not *avarus*—desirous of keeping" BOSWELL "I have heard old Mr. Sheridan maintain, with much ingenuity, that a complete miser is a happy man, a miser who gives himself wholly to the one passion of saving" JOHNSON "That is flying in the face of all the world, who have called an avaricious man a *miser*, because he is miserable No, Sir, a man who both spends and saves money is the happiest man, because he has both enjoyments"

The conversation having turned on *Bon Mots*, he quoted from one of the *Ana* an exquisite instance of flattery in a maid of honour in France, who being asked by the Queen what o'clock it was, answered, "What your Majesty pleases" He admitted that Mr Burke's classical pun upon Mr Wilkes's being carried on the shoulders of the mob,

" ——— Numerisque fertur
Lege solutus, ———

was admirable, and though he was strangely unwilling to allow to that extraordinary man the talent of wit,^a he also laughed with approbation at another of his playful conceits, which was, that "Horace has in one line given a description of a good desirable manour:

'*Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines.*'

that is to say, a *modus* as to the tithes and certain *fines*"

^a See this question fully investigated in the Notes upon my "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," edit 3, p. 21, *et seq* And here, as a lawyer mindful of the maxim

He observed, "A man cannot with propriety speak of himself, except he relates simple facts, as, 'I was at Richmond.' or what depends on mensuration, as, 'I am six feet high' He is sure he has been at Richmond, he is sure he is six feet high but he cannot be sure he is wise, or that he has any other excellence. Then, all censure of a man's self is oblique praise. It is in order to shew how much he can spare It has all the invidiousness of self-praise, and all the reproach of falsehood" BOSWELL "Sometimes it may proceed from a man's strong consciousness of his faults being observed He knows that others would throw him down, and therefore he had better lye down softly of his own accord"

On Tuesday, April 28, he was engaged to dine at General Paoli's, where, as I have already observed, I was still entertained in elegant hospitality, and with all the ease and comfort of a home I called on him, and accompanied him in a hackney-coach We stopped first at the bottom of Hedge-lane, into which he went to leave a letter, "with good news for a poor man in distress," as he told me. I did not question him particularly as to this¹ He himself often resembled Lady Bolingbroke's lively description of Pope that "he was *un politique aux choux et aux raves*." He would say, "I dine to-day in Grosvenor-square," this might be with a Duke or, perhaps, "I dine to-day at the other end of the town" or, "A gentleman of great eminence called on me yesterday"—He loved thus to keep things floating in conjecture *Omne ignotum pro magnifico est* I believe I ventured to dissipate the cloud, to unveil the mystery, more freely and frequently than any of his friends. We stopped again at Wiggman's, the corner of St James's-street, a *toy-shop*, to which he had been directed, but not clearly, for he searched about some time, and could not find it at first, and said, "To direct one only to a corner shop is *toying* with one" I suppose he meant this as a play upon the word *toy* it was the first time that I knew him stoop to such sport After he had been some time in the shop, he sent for me to come out of the coach, and help him to choose a pair of silver buckles, as those he had were too small Probably

Suum cuique tribuendo, I cannot forbear to mention, that the additional Note beginning with "I find since the former edition," is not mine, but was obligingly furnished by Mr Malone, who was so kind as to superintend the press while I was in Scotland, and the first part of the second edition was printing He would not allow me to ascribe it to its proper authour, but as it is exquisitely acute and elegant, I take this opportunity, without his knowledge, to do him justice.

¹ His *protégé* Lowe, the painter, lived here, as Cunningham pointed out to Mr Croker

this alteration in dress had been suggested by Mrs. Thrale, by associating with whom, his external appearance was much improved¹ He got better clothes, and the dark colour, from which he never deviated, was enlivened by metal buttons His wigs, too, were much better, and during their travels in France, he was furnished with a Paris-made wig, of handsome construction This choosing of silver buckles was a negotiation "Sir, (said he,) I will not have the ridiculous large ones now in fashion, and I will give no more than a guinea for a pair." Such were the *principles* of the business, and, after some examination, he was fitted As we drove along, I found him in a talking humour, of which I availed myself BOSWELL "I was this morning in Ridley's shop, Sir, and was told, that the collection called '*Johnsoniana*' has sold very much." JOHNSON "Yet the '*Journey to the Hebrides*' has not had a great sale." BOSWELL "That is strange" JOHNSON "Yes, Sir, for in that book I have told the world a great deal that they did not know before"

BOSWELL. "I drank chocolate, Sir, this forenoon with Mr. Eld, and, to my no small surprize, found him to be a *Staffordshire Whig*, a being which I did not believe had existed" JOHNSON "Sir, there are rascals in all countries." BOSWELL "Eld said, a Tory was a creature generated between a non-juring parson and one's grandmother" JOHNSON "And I have always said, the first Whig was the Devil" BOSWELL. "He certainly was, Sir The Devil was impatient of subordination, he was the first who resisted power."

'Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven'

At General Paoli's were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Langton, Marchese Gherardi² of Lombardy, and Mr John Spottiswoode, of Spottiswoode,³ the solicitor At this time fears of an invasion were circulated, to obviate which, Mr Spottiswoode observed, that Mr Fraser the engineer, who had lately come from Dunkirk, said,

¹ Here he either was mistaken, or had a different notion of an extensive sale from what is generally entertained for the fact is, that four thousand copies of that excellent work were sold very quickly A new edition has been printed since his death, besides that in the collection of his works

² In the phraseology of Scotland, I should have said, "Mr Spottiswoode, of that ilk" Johnson knew that sense of the word very well, and has thus explained it in his Dictionary, *voce* ILK—"It also signifies 'the same,' as, *Mackintosh of that ilk*, denotes a gentleman whose surname and the title of his estate are the same"

³ It was suggested by Mr Thrale, not by his wife—*Mrs Pissini's Marginalia*

² The Gherardi of Florence are the original stock of the Irish Fitzgeralds.

that the French had the same fears of us JOHNSON. "It is thus that mutual cowardice keep us in peace Were one half of mankind brave, and one half cowards, the brave would be always beating the cowards Were all brave, they would lead a very uneasy life, all would be continually fighting but being all cowards, we go on very well."

We talked of drinking wine JOHNSON "I require wine only when I am alone I have then often wished for it, and often taken it." SPOTTISWOODE "What, by way of a companion, Sir?" JOHNSON "To get rid of myself, to send myself away Wine gives great pleasure, and every pleasure is of itself a good It is a good, unless counterbalanced by evil A man may have a strong reason not to drink wine, and that may be greater than the pleasure Wine makes a man better pleased with himself. I do not say that it makes him more pleasing to others. Sometimes it does But the danger is, that while a man grows better pleased with himself, he may be growing less pleasing to others" Wine gives a man nothing It neither gives him knowledge nor wit, it only animates a man, and enables him to bring out what a dread of the company has repressed It only puts in motion what has been locked up in frost But this may be good, or it may be bad" SPOTTISWOODE. "Sp, Sir, wine is a key which opens a box but this box may be either full or empty" JOHNSON "Nay, Sir, conversation is the key wine is a pick-lock which forces open the box and injures it A man should cultivate his mind so as to have that confidence and readiness without wine, which wine gives" BOSWELL "The great difficulty of resisting wine is from benevolence For instance, a good worthy man asks you to taste his wine which he has had twenty years in his cellar." JOHNSON "Sir, all this notion about benevolence arises from a man imagining himself to be of more importance to others, than he really is They don't care a farthing whether he drinks wine or not." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS "Yes, they do for the time" JOHNSON. "For the time!—If they care this minute, they forget it the next And as for the good worthy man, how do we know he is good and worthy? No good and worthy man will insist upon another man's drinking wine As to the wine twenty years in the cellar—of ten men, three say this, merely because they must say something,—three are telling a lie, when they say they have had the wine twenty years,—three would rather save the wine,—

* It is observed in Waller's Life, in the *Biographia Britannica*, that he drank only water, and that while he sat in a company who were drinking wine, "he had the dexterity to accommodate his discourse to the pitch of theirs as it *sunk*" If excess in drinking be meant, the remark is acutely just But surely, a moderate use of wine gives a gaiety of spirits which water-drinkers know not.

one, perhaps, cares I allow it is something to please one's company; and people are always pleased with those who partake pleasure with them But after a man has brought himself to relinquish the great personal pleasure which arises from drinking wine, any other consideration is a trifle To please others by drinking wine, is something, only if there be nothing against it. I should, however, be sorry to offend worthy men.

'Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe.'

BOSWELL "Curst be the *spring*, the *water*" JOHNSON "But let us consider what a sad thing it would be, if we were obliged to drink or do any thing else that may happen to be agreeable to the company where we are" LANGTON "By the same rule you must join with a gang of cut purses" JOHNSON "Yes, Sir but yet we must do justice to wine we must allow it the power it possesses. To make a man pleased with himself, let me tell you, is doing a very great thing,

'*Si patriæ volumus, si Nobis vivere cari*'"

I was at this time myself a water drinker upon trial by JOHNSON'S recommendation JOHNSON "Boswell is a bolder combatant than Sir Joshua he argues for wine without the help of wine, but Sir Joshua with it." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS "But to please one's company is a strong motive" JOHNSON (who, from drinking only water, supposed every body who drank wine to be elevated,) "I won't argue any more with you, Sir. You are too far gone." SIR JOSHUA "I should have thought so indeed, Sir, had I made such a speech as you have now done" JOHNSON (drawing himself in, and, I really thought, blushing) "Nay, don't be angry I did not mean to offend you" SIR JOSHUA "At first the taste of wine was disagreeable to me, but I brought myself to drink it, that I might be like other people. The pleasure of drinking wine is so connected with pleasing your company that altogether there is something of social goodness in it." JOHNSON. "Sir, this is only saying the same thing over again" SIR JOSHUA "No, this is new." JOHNSON "You put it in new words, but it is an old thought. This is one of the disadvantages of wine. It makes a man mistake words for thoughts" BOSWELL "I think it is a new thought, at least, it is in a new *attitude*" JOHNSON "Nay, Sir, it is only in a new coat, or an old coat with a new facing (Then laughing heartily) It is the old dog in a new doublet—An extraordinary instance however may occur where a man's patron will do nothing

for him, unless he will drink: *there* may be a good reason for drinking "

I mentioned a nobleman who I believed was really uneasy if his company would not drink hard¹ JOHNSON "That is from having had people about him whom he has been accustomed to command." BOSWELL "Supposing I should be *tête à tête* with him at table " JOHNSON "Sir, there is no more reason for your drinking with *him*, than his being sober with *you* " BOSWELL. "Why that is true, for it would do him less hurt to be sober, than it would do me to get drunk " JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, and from what I have heard of him, one would not wish to sacrifice himself to such a man If he must always have somebody to drink with him, he should buy a slave, and then he would be sure to have it They who submit to drink as another pleases, make themselves his slaves " BOSWELL. "But, Sir, you will surely make allowance for the duty of hospitality A gentleman who loves drinking comes to visit me " JOHNSON "Sir, a man knows whom he visits, he comes to the table of a sober man " BOSWELL. "But, Sir, you and I should not have been so well received in the Highlands and Hebrides, if I had not drank with our worthy friends. Had I drunk water only as you did, they would not have been so cordial " JOHNSON "Sir William Temple mentions that in his travels through the Netherlands he had two or three gentlemen with him, and when a bumper was necessary he put it on *them* Were I to travel again through the Highlands, I would have Sir Joshua with me to take the bumpers " BOSWELL "But, Sir, let me put a case Suppose Sir Joshua should take a jaunt into Scotland, he does me the honour to pay me a visit at my house in the country, I am overjoyed at seeing him, we are quite by ourselves, shall I unsociably and churlishly let him sit drinking by himself? No, no, my dear Sir Joshua, you shall not be treated so, I *will* take a bottle with you "

The celebrated Mrs Rudd being mentioned, JOHNSON. "Fifteen years ago I should have gone to see her." SPOTTISWOODE "Because she was fifteen years younger?" JOHNSON "No, Sir, but now they have a trick of putting every thing into the news papers."

He begged of General Paoli to repeat one of the introductory stanzas of the first book of Tasso's "Jerusalem," which he did, and then Johnson found fault with the simile of sweetening the edges of a cup for a child, being transferred from Lucretius into an

¹ In the *Boswelliana* is recorded an ingenious device for avoiding such pressure Colonel Luttrell was at the house of a gentleman who locked the door

and wished to force him to drink. "Come, sir," said the gentleman, "fill your glass " "Sir," said the colonel, at last, "I don't like your wine "

us, yet what large books have we upon it, the whole of which excepting such parts as are taken from those old writers is all a dream, such as Whitaker's 'Manchester' I have heard Henry's 'History of Britain' well spoken of, I am told it is carried on in separate divisions, as the civil, the military, the religious history, I wish much to have one branch well done, and that is the history of manners, of common life " ROBERTSON " Henry should have applied his attention to that alone, which is enough for any man, and he might have found a great deal scattered in various books, had he read solely with that view Henry erred in not selling his first volume at a moderate price to the booksellers, that they might have pushed him on till he had got reputation I sold my 'History of Scotland' at a moderate price, as a work by which the booksellers might either gain or not, and Cadell has told me that Millar and he have got six thousand pounds by it I afterwards received a much higher price for my writings An authour should sell his first work for what the booksellers will give, till it shall appear whether he is an authour of merit, or, which is the same thing as to purchase money, an authour who pleases the publick "

Dr Robertson expatiated on the character of a certain nobleman,¹ that he was one of the strongest minded men that ever lived, that he would sit in company quite sluggish, while there was nothing to call forth his intellectual vigour, but the moment that any important subject was started, for instance, how this country is to be defended against a French invasion, he would rouse himself, and shew his extraordinary talents with the most powerful ability and animation. JOHNSON " Yet this man cut his own throat The true strong and sound mind is the mind that can embrace equally great things and small Now I am told the King of Prussia will say to a servant, 'Bring me a bottle of such a wine, which came in such a year, it lies in such a corner of the cellars' I would have a man to be great in great things, and elegant in little things ' He said to me afterwards, when we were by ourselves, "Robertson was in a mighty romantick humour, he talked of one whom he did not know, but I *downed* him with the King of Prussia"—"Yes, Sir, (said I,) you threw a *bottle* at his head "

An ingenious gentleman was mentioned, concerning whom both Robertson and Ramsay agreed that he had a constant firmness of mind, for after a laborious day, and amidst a multiplicity of cares and anxieties, he would sit down with his sisters and be quite cheerful and good-humoured. Such a disposition it was observed,

¹ Mr Croker states that Lord Clive is alluded to here

was a happy gift of nature JOHNSON "I do not think so, a man has from nature a certain portion of mind, the use he makes of it depends upon his own free will That a man has always the same firmness of mind I do not say, because every man feels his mind less firm at one time than at another, but I think a man's being in a good or bad humour depends upon his will." I, however, could not help thinking that a man's humour is often uncontrollable by his will.

Johnson harangued against drinking wine, "A man (said he) may choose whether he will have abstemiousness and knowledge, or claret and ignorance." Dr Robertson (who is very companionable) was beginning to dissent as to the proscription of claret. JOHNSON (with a placid smile) "Nay, Sir, you shall not differ with me, as I have said that the man is most perfect who takes in the most things, I am for knowledge and claret." ROBERTSON (holding a glass of generous claret in his hand) "Sir, I can only drink your health." JOHNSON "Sir, I should be sorry if you should be ever in such a state as to be able to do nothing more" ROBERTSON. "Dr Johnson, allow me to say, that in one respect I have the advantage of you, when you were in Scotland you would not come to hear any of our preachers, whereas when I am here I attend your public worship without scruple, and indeed, with great satisfaction" JOHNSON "Why, Sir, that is not so extraordinary the King of Siam sent ambassadors to Louis the Fourteenth, but Louis the Fourteenth sent none to the King of Siam"*

Here my friend for once discovered a want of knowledge or forgetfulness, for Louis the Fourteenth did send an embassy to the King of Siam, and the Abbé Choisis, who was employed in it, published an account of it in two volumes

Next day, Thursday, April 30, I found him at home by himself JOHNSON "Well, Sir, Ramsay gave us a splendid dinner. I love Ramsay You will not find a man in whose conversation there is more instruction, more information, and more elegance, than in Ramsay's." BOSWELL "What I admire in Ramsay, is his continuing to be so young" JOHNSON "Why yes, Sir, it is to be admired. I value myself upon this, that there is nothing of the old man in my conversation. I am now sixty-eight, and I have no more of it than at twenty-eight" BOSWELL "But, Sir, would not you wish to know old age? He who is never an old man does not know the whole of human life, for old age is one of the

* Mrs Piozz confidently mentions this as having passed in Scotland, "Anecdotes," p 62.

divisions of it" JOHNSON "Nay, Sir, what talk is this?" BOSWELL "I mean, Sir the Sphinx's description of it—morning, noon, and night I would know night, as well as morning and noon" JOHNSON "What, Sir, would you know what it is to feel the evils of old age? Would you have the gout? Would you have decrepitude?"—Seeing him heated I would not argue any farther, but I was confident that I was in the right I would, in due time, be a Nestor, an elder of the people, and there *should* be some difference between the conversation of twenty eight and sixty eight A grave picture should not be gay. There is a serene, solemn, placid old age. JOHNSON "Mrs Thrale's mother said of me what flattered me much A clergyman was complaining of want of society in the country where he lived, and said, 'They talk of *runts*,' (that is, young cows) 'Sir, (said Mrs Salusbury,) Mr Johnson would learn to talk of runts' meaning that I was a man who would make the most of my situation, whatever it was." He added, "I think myself a very polite man"

On Saturday May 2, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where there was a very large company, and a great deal of conversation, but owing to some circumstance which I cannot now recollect, I have no record of any part of it, except that there were several people there by no means of the Johnsonian school; so that less attention was paid to him than usual, which put him out of humour, and upon some imaginary offence from me he attacked me with such rudeness, that I was vexed and angry, because it gave those persons an opportunity of enlarging upon his supposed ferocity, and ill treatment of his best friends I was so much hurt, and had my pride so much roused, that I kept away from him for a week, and perhaps might have kept away much longer, nay, gone to Scotland without seeing him again, had not we fortunately met and been reconciled. To such unhappy chances are human friendships liable

On Friday, May 8, I dined with him at Mr Langton's I was reserved and silent, which I suppose he perceived, and might recollect the cause After dinner, when Mr Langton was called out of the room, and we were by ourselves, he drew his chair near to mine and said, in a tone of conciliating courtesy, "Well, how have you done?" BOSWELL "Sir, you have made me very uneasy by your behaviour to me when we were last at Sir Joshua Reynolds's. You know, my dear Sir, no man has a greater respect and affection for you, or would sooner go to the end of the world to serve you. Now to treat me so— He insisted that I had interrupted him, which I assured him was not the case, and proceeded, "But why

treat me so before people who neither love you nor me?" JOHNSON. "Well, I am sorry for it I'll make it up to you twenty different ways, as you please" BOSWELL "I said to-day to Sir Joshua, when he observed that you *tossed* me sometimes, I don't care how often, or how high he tosses me, when only friends are present, for then I fall upon soft ground but I do not like falling on stones, which is the case when enemies are present.—I think this a pretty good image, Sir." JOHNSON "Sir, it is one of the happiest I have ever heard"

The truth is, there was no venom in the wounds which he inflicted at any time, unless they were irritated by some malignant infusion by other hands We were instantly as cordial again as ever, and joined in hearty laugh at some ludicrous but innocent peculiarities of one of our friends BOSWELL "Do you think, Sir, it is always culpable to laugh at a man to his face?" JOHNSON "Why, Sir, that depends upon the man and the thing If it is a slight man, and a slight thing, you may, for you take nothing valuable from him"

He said, "I read yesterday Dr Blair's sermon on Devotion, from the text '*Cornelius, a devout man*' His doctrine is the best limited, the best expressed there is the most warmth without fanaticism, the most rational transport There is one part of it which I disapprove, and I'd have him correct it, which is, that 'he who does not feel joy in religion is far from the kingdom of heaven' There are many good men whose fear of God predominates over their love. It may discourage It was rashly said A noble sermon it is indeed I wish Blair would come over to the Church of England"

When Mr Langton returned to us, the "flow of talk" went on. An eminent authour being mentioned,—JOHNSON "He is not a pleasant man His conversation is neither instructive nor brilliant He does not talk as if impelled by any fullness of knowledge or vivacity of imagination. His conversation is like that of any other sensible man He talks with no wish either to inform or to hear, but only because he thinks it does not become —————¹ to sit in a company and say nothing"

Mr Langton having repeated the anecdote of Addison having distinguished between his powers in conversation and in writing, by saying "I have only nine-pence in my pocket, but I can draw for a thousand pounds;"—JOHNSON "He had not that retort ready, Sir, he had prepared it before hand" LANGTON. (turning to me) "A fine surmise Set a thief to catch a thief."

¹ To be filled, as Mr Croker supposes, with the name of Dr. Robertson.

Johnson called the East Indians barbarians BOSWELL. "You will except the Chinese, Sir?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir." BOSWELL. "Have they not arts?" JOHNSON. "They have pottery." BOSWELL. "What do you say to the written characters of their language?" JOHNSON. "Sir, they have not an alphabet. They have not been able to form what all other nations have formed." BOSWELL. "There is more learning in their language than in any other, from the immense number of their characters" JOHNSON. "It is only more difficult from its rudeness, as there is more labour in hewing down a tree with a stone than with an axe"

He said, "I have been reading Lord Kames's 'Sketches of the History of Man.' In treating of severity of punishment, he mentions that of Madame Lapouchin, in Russia, but he does not give it fairly, for I have looked at *Chappe D'Auteroche*, from whom he has taken it. He stops where it is said that the spectators thought her innocent, and leaves out what follows, that she nevertheless was guilty. Now this is being as culpable as one can conceive, to misrepresent fact in a book, and for what motive? It is like one of those lies which people tell, one cannot see why. The woman's life was spared, and no punishment is too great for the favourite of an Empress who had conspired to dethrone her mistress." BOSWELL. "He was only giving a picture of the lady in her sufferings." JOHNSON. "Nay, don't endeavour to palliate this. Guilt is a principal feature in the picture. Kames is puzzled with a question that puzzled me when I was a very young man. Why is it that the interest of money is lower, when money is plentiful, for five pounds has the same proportion of value to a hundred pounds when money is plentiful, as when it is scarce? A lady explained it to me. 'It is (said she) because when money is plentiful there are so many more who have money to lend, that they bid down one another. Many have then a hundred pounds, and one says, Take mine rather than another's, and you shall have it at four per cent.'" BOSWELL. "Does Lord Kames decide the question?" JOHNSON. "I think he leaves it as he found it." BOSWELL. "This must have been an extraordinary lady who instructed you, Sir. May I ask who she was?" JOHNSON. "Molly Aston, Sir, the sister of those

* Johnson had an extraordinary admiration of this lady, notwithstanding she was a violent Whig. In answer to her high flown speeches for *Liberty*, he addressed to her the following Epigram, of which I presume to offer a translation.

*"Liber ut esse velim suavis pulchra Maria,
Ut maneam liber pulchra Maria vale."*

Adieu, Maria! since you'd have me free,
For, who beholds thy charms a slave must be

Cor et Ad—Add to the note as follows—"A correspondent of 'The Gentleman's

ladies with whom you dined at Lichfield.—I shall be at home to-morrow." BOSWELL. "Then let us dine by ourselves at the Mitre, to keep up the old custom, 'the custom of the Manor,' the custom of the mitre." JOHNSON "Sir, so it shall be."

On Saturday, May 9, we fulfilled our purpose of dining by ourselves at the Mitre, according to old custom. There was, on these occasions, a little circumstance of kind attention to Mrs. Williams, which must not be omitted. Before coming out, and leaving her to dine alone, he gave her her choice of a chicken, a sweetbread, or any other little nice thing, which was carefully sent to her from the tavern, ready drest

Our conversation to-day, I know not how, turned, (I think for the only time at any length, during our long acquaintance,) upon the sensual intercourse between the sexes, the delight of which he ascribed chiefly to imagination "Were it not for imagination, Sir (said he,) a man would be as happy in the arms of a chambermaid as of a Duchess. But such is the adventitious charm of fancy, that we find men who have violated the best principles of society, and ruined their fame and their fortune, that they might possess a woman of rank." It would not be proper to record the particulars of such a conversation in moments of unreserved frankness, when nobody was present on whom it could have any hurtful effect. That subject, when philosophically treated, may surely employ the mind in as curious discussion, and as innocently as anatomy, provided that those who do treat it keep clear of inflammatory incentives.

"From grave to gay, from lively to severe,"—we were soon engaged in very different speculation, humbly and reverently considering and wondering at the universal mystery of all things, as our imperfect faculties can now judge of them "There are (said he) innumerable questions to which the inquisitive mind can in this state receive no answer. Why do you and I exist? Why was this world created? Since it was to be created, why was it not created sooner?"

Magazine,' who subscribes himself SCIOLUS, to whom I am indebted for several excellent remarks, observes, 'The turn of Dr. Johnson's lines to Miss Aston, whose Whig principles he had been combating, appears to me to be taken from an ingenious epigram in the "*Menagiana*," (Vol. III. p. 376, edit. 1716,) on a young lady who appeared at a masquerade, *habillé en Jésuite*, during the fierce contentions of the followers of Molinos and Jansenius concerning free-will

"On s'étonne ici que Caliste
Ait pris l'habit de Jésuite.
Puisque cette jeune beauté
Ote à chacun sa liberté
N'est-ce pas une Janséniste?"

On Sunday, May 10, I supped with him at Mr Hoole's, with Sir Joshua Reynolds. I have neglected the memorial of this evening, so as to remember no more of it than two particulars, one, that he strenuously opposed an argument by Sir Joshua, that virtue was preferable to vice, considering this life only, and that a man would be virtuous were it only to preserve his character. and, that he expressed much wonder at the curious formation of the bat, a mouse with wings, saying, that "it was almost as strange a thing in physiology, as if the fabulous dragon could be seen."

On Tuesday, May 12, I waited on the Earl of Marchmont, to know if his Lordship would favour Dr Johnson with information concerning Pope, whose Life he was about to write. Johnson had not flattered himself with the hopes of receiving any civility from this nobleman, for he said to me, when I mentioned Lord Marchmont as one who could tell him a great deal about Pope, "Sir, he will tell *me* nothing." I had the honour of being known to his Lordship, and applied to him of myself, without being commissioned by Johnson. His Lordship behaved in the most polite and obliging manner, promised to tell all he recollected about Pope, and was so very courteous as to say, "Tell Dr. Johnson I have a great respect for him, and am ready to show it in any way I can. I am to be in the city to-morrow, and will call at his house as I return." His Lordship however asked, "Will he write the Lives of the Poets impartially?" He was the first that brought Whig and Tory into a Dictionary. And what do you think of his definition of *Excuse*? Do you know the history of his aversion to the word *transpire*?" Then taking down the folio Dictionary, he shewed it with this censure on its secondary sense "To escape from secrecy to notice, a sense lately innovated from France, without necessity." The truth was, Lord Bolingbroke, who left the Jacobites, first used it, therefore, it was to be condemned. He should have shewn what word would do for it, if it was unnecessary." I afterwards put the question to Johnson "Why, Sir, (said he,) *get abroad*?" BOSWELL "That, Sir, is using two words." JOHNSON "Sir, there's no end of this. You may as well insist to have a word for old age." BOSWELL "Well, Sir, *Senectus*." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, to insist always that there should be one word to express a thing in English, because there is one in another language, is to change the language."

I availed myself of this opportunity to hear from his Lordship many particulars both of Pope and Lord Bolingbroke, which I have in writing.

I proposed to Lord Marchmont that he should revise Johnson's

Life of Pope "So (said his Lordship) you would put me in a dangerous situation. You know he knocked down Osborne the bookseller"¹

Elated with the success of my spontaneous exertion to procure material and respectable aid to Johnson for his very favourite work, "The Lives of the Poets," I hastened down to Mr. Thrale's at Streatham, where he now was, that I might insure his being at home next day, and after dinner, when I thought he would receive the good news in the best humour, I announced it eagerly "I have been at work for you to-day, Sir I have been with Lord Marchmont He bid me tell you he has a great respect for you, and will call on you to-morrow at one o'clock, and communicate all he knows about Pope"—Here I paused, in full expectation that he would be pleased with this intelligence, would praise my active merit, and would be alert to embrace such an offer from a nobleman. But whether I had shewn an over exultation, which provoked his spleen; or whether he was seized with a suspicion that I had obtruded him on Lord Marchmont, and had humbled him too much, or whether there was any thing more than an unlucky fit of ill humour, I know not, but, to my surprize, the result was,—JOHNSON "I shall not be in town to-morrow I don't care to know about Pope" MRS THRALE (surprized as I was, and a little angry) "I suppose, Sir, Mr Boswell thought, that as you are to write Pope's Life, you would wish to know about him" JOHNSON "Wish! why yes. If it rained knowledge I'd hold out my hand, but I would not give myself the trouble to go in quest of it." There was no arguing with him at the moment Some time afterwards he said, "Lord Marchmont will call on me, and then I shall call on Lord Marchmont" Mr Thrale was uneasy at his unaccountable caprice, and told me, that if I did not take care to bring about a meeting between Lord Marchmont and him, it would never take place, which would be a great pity I sent a card to his Lordship, to be left at Johnson's house, acquainting him, that Dr. Johnson could not be in town next day, but would do himself the honour of waiting on him at another time—I give this account fairly, as a specimen of that unhappy temper with which this great and good man had occasionally to struggle, from something morbid in his constitution. Let the most censorious of my readers suppose himself to have a violent fit of the tooth-ach, or to have received a severe stroke on the shin-

¹ "My Lord Marchmont did me the honour of a visit a few years ago, and made a remark which still vibrates in my ear 'Say, this country has been

governed by wise men, and we have had no notion what mischief fools could do'"
—*Letter to the people of Scotland*

bone, and when in such a state to be asked a question, and if he has any candour, he will not be surprized at the answers which Johnson sometimes gave in moments of irritation, which, let me assure them, is exquisitely painful. But it must not be erroneously supposed that he was, in the smallest degree, careless concerning any work which he undertook, or that he was generally thus peevish. It will be seen, that in the following year he had a very agreeable interview with Lord Marchmont, at his Lordship's house; and this very afternoon he soon forgot any fretfulness, and fell into conversation as usual.

I mentioned a reflection having been thrown out against four Peers for having presumed to rise in opposition to the opinion of the twelve Judges, in a cause in the House of Lords,¹ as if that were indecent. JOHNSON "Sir, there is no ground for censure. The Peers are Judges themselves and supposing them really to be of a different opinion, they might from duty be in opposition to the Judges, who were there only to be consulted."

In this observation I fully concurred with him, for, unquestionably, all the Peers are vested with the highest judicial powers, and, when they are confident that they understand a cause, are not obliged nay ought not to acquiesce in the opinion of the ordinary law Judges, or even in that of those who from their studies and experience are called the Law Lords. I consider the Peers in general as I do a Jury, who ought to listen with respectful attention to the sages of the law, but, if after hearing them, they have a firm opinion of their own, are bound, as honest men, to decide accordingly. Nor is it so difficult for them to understand even law questions, as is generally thought, provided they will bestow sufficient attention upon them. This observation was made by my honoured relation the late Lord Cathcart, who had spent his life in camps and courts, yet assured me, that he could form a clear opinion upon most of the causes that came before the House of Lords, "as they were so well enucleated in the Cases."

Mrs. Thrale told us, that a curious clergyman of our acquaintance had discovered a licentious stanza, which Pope had originally in his "Universal Prayer," before the stanza

"What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns us not to do, &c.

It was this.

"Can sins of moment claim the rod
Of everlasting fires?"

¹ The writ of error in the case of "Parson" Horne

And that offend great Nature's God,
Which Nature's self inspires ? "

and that Dr. Johnson observed, "it had been borrowed from *Guarini* " There are, indeed, in *Pastor Fido*, many such flimsy superficial reasonings, as that in the two last lines of this stanza.

BOSWELL. "In that stanza of Pope's, '*rod of fires*,' is certainly a bad metaphor " MRS. THRALE "And '*sins of moment*' is a faulty expression, for its true import is *momentous*, which cannot be intended " JOHNSON "It must have been written '*of momentis*.' Of *moment*, is *momentous*; of *moments*, *momentary* I warrant you, however, Pope wrote this stanza, and some friend struck it out Boileau wrote some such thing, and Arnaud struck it out, saying, '*Vous gagnerez deux ou trois unptes, et perdrez je ne sais combien des honnettes gens* ' These fellows want to say a daring thing, and don't know how to go about it. Mere poets know no more of fundamental principles than—" Here he was interrupted somehow. Mrs Thrale mentioned Dryden JOHNSON "He puzzled himself about predestination—How foolish was it in Pope to give all his friendship to Lords, who thought they honoured him by being with him, and to choose such Lords as Burlington, and Cobham, and Bolingbroke? Bathurst was negative, a pleasing man, and I have heard no ill of Maichmont and then always saying, 'I do not value you for being a Lord,' which was a sure proof that he did. I never say, I do not value Boswell more for being born to an estate, because I do not care " BOSWELL "Nor for being a Scotchman?" JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, I do value you more for being a Scotchman You are a Scotchman without the faults of Scotchmen You would not have been so valuable as you are, had you not been a Scotchman "

Talking of divorces, I asked if Othello's doctrine was not plausible :

"He who is robb'd, not wanting what is stolen,
Let him not know't, and he's not robb'd at all."

Dr Johnson and Mrs Thrale joined against this. JOHNSON "Ask any man if he'd wish not to know of such an injury." BOSWELL "Would you tell your friend to make him unhappy?" JOHNSON. "Perhaps, Sir, I should not, but that would be from prudence on my own account. A man would tell his father." BOSWELL. "Yes; because he would not have spurious children to get any share of the family inheritance." MRS. THRALE. "Or he would tell his brother."

BOSWELL "Certainly his *elder* brother" JOHNSON "You would tell your friend of a woman's infamy, to prevent his marrying a whore there is the same reason to tell him of his wife's infidelity, when he is married, to prevent the consequences of imposition It is a breach of confidence not to tell a friend." BOSWELL. "Would you tell Mr. ——— ?"¹ (naming a gentleman who assuredly was not in the least danger of such a miserable disgrace, though married to a fine woman) JOHNSON "No, Sir, because it would do no good he is so sluggish, he'd never go to parliament and get through a divorce"

He said of one of our friends, "He is ruining himself without pleasure A man who loses at play, or who runs out his fortune at court, makes his estate less, in hopes of making it bigger (I am sure of this word, which was often used by him) but it is a sad thing to pass through the quagmire of parsimony, to the gulph of ruin To pass over the flowery path of extravagance is very well"

Amongst the numerous prints pasted on the walls of the dining-room at Streatham, was Hogarth's "Modern Midnight Conversation" I asked him what he knew of Parson Ford, who makes a conspicuous figure in the riotous groupe JOHNSON. "Sir, he was my acquaintance and relation, my mother's nephew. He had purchased a living in the country, but not simoniacally. I never saw him but in the country I have been told he was a man of great parts, very profligate, but I never heard he was impious" BOSWELL. "Was there not a story of his ghost having appeared?" JOHNSON "Sir, it was believed A waiter at the Hummums, in which house Ford died, had been absent for some time, and returned, not knowing that Ford was dead Going down to the cellar, according to the story, he met him, going down again he met him a second time When he came up, he asked some of the people of the house what Ford could be doing there They told him Ford was dead The waiter took a fever, in which he lay for some time When he recovered, he said he had a message to deliver to some women from Ford, but he was not to tell what, or to whom He walked out; he was followed, but somewhere about St Paul's they lost him He came back, and said he had delivered the message, and the women exclaimed, 'Then we are all undone' Dr Pellet, who was not a credulous man, inquired into the truth of this story, and he said, the evidence was irresistible My wife went to the Hummums; (it is a place where people get themselves

¹ Mrs. Thrale writes in the margin of her copy, "*Langton*"

cupped) I believe she went with intention to hear about this story of Ford At first they made difficulty to tell her; but, after they had talked to her, she came away satisfied that it was true. To be sure, the man had a fever, and this vision may have been the beginning of it But if the message to the women, and their behaviour upon it were true as related, there was something supernatural. That rests upon his word, and there it remains "

After Mrs. Thrale was gone to bed, Johnson and I sat up late. We resumed Sir Joshua Reynolds's argument on Sunday last, that a man would be virtuous though he had no other motive than to preserve his character. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not true for as to this world vice does not hurt a man's character." BOSWELL "Yes, Sir; debauching a friend's wife will." JOHNSON "No, Sir Who thinks the worse of —— for it?" BOSWELL "Lord —— was not his friend." JOHNSON "That is only a circumstance, Sir, a slight distinction. He could not get into the house but by Lord ——.¹ A man is chosen Knight of the shire, not the less for having debauched ladies " BOSWELL. "What, Sir, if he debauched the ladies of gentlemen in the county, will not there be a general resentment against him?" JOHNSON "No, Sir He will lose those particular gentlemen, but the rest will not trouble their heads about it." (warmly.) BOSWELL. "Well, Sir, I cannot think so " JOHNSON "Nay, Sir, there is no talking with a man who will dispute what everybody knows (angrily.) Don't you know this?" BOSWELL. "No, Sir, and I wish to think better of your country than you represent it. I knew in Scotland a gentleman obliged to leave it for debauching a lady, and in one of our counties an Earl's brother lost his election, because he had debauched the lady of another Earl in that county, and broken the peace of a noble family."

Still he would not yield He proceeded "Will you not allow, Sir, that vice does not hurt a man's character so as to obstruct his prosperity in life, when you know that —— ———,² was loaded with wealth and honours, a man who had acquired his fortune by such crimes, that his consciousness of them impelled him to cut his own throat." BOSWELL. "You will recollect, Sir, that Dr Robertson said, he cut his throat because he was weary of still life, little things not being sufficient to move his great mind" JOHNSON. (very angry) "Nay, Sir, what stuff is this? You had no more this opinion after Robertson said it, than before I know nothing

¹ These blanks should be filled with the names of Beauclerk and Bolingbroke

² Lord Clive

more offensive than repeating what one knows to be foolish things, by way of continuing a dispute, to see what a man will answer, to make him your butt!" (angrier still) BOSWELL "My dear Sir, I had no such intention as you seem to suspect; I had not indeed. Might not this nobleman have felt every thing 'weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable, as Hamlet says?' " JOHNSON "Nay, if you are to bring in gabble, I'll talk no more I will not, upon my honour." My readers will decide upon this dispute

Next morning I stated to Mrs Thrale at breakfast, before he came down, the dispute of last night as to the influence of character upon success in life. She said he was certainly wrong, and told me, that a Baronet lost an election in Wales, because he had debauched the sister of a gentleman in the county, whom he made one of his daughters invite as her companion at his seat in the country, when his lady and his other children were in London. But she would not encounter Johnson upon the subject.

I staid all this day with him at Streatham. He talked a great deal, in very good humour.

Looking at Messrs Dilly's splendid edition of Lord Chesterfield's miscellaneous works, he laughed, and said, "Here now are two speeches ascribed to him, both of which were written by me: and the best of it is, they have found out that one is like Demosthenes, and the other like Cicero"

He censured Lord Kames's "Sketches of the History of Man," for misrepresenting Clarendon's account of the appearance of Sir George Villiers's ghost, as if Clarendon were weakly credulous; when the truth is, that Clarendon only says, that the story was upon a better foundation of credit, than usually such discourses are founded upon, nay, speaks thus of the person who was reported to have seen the vision, "the poor man, *if he had been at all waking*," which Lord Kames has omitted. He added, "in this book it is maintained that virtue is natural to man, and that if we would but consult our own hearts we should be virtuous Now after consulting our own hearts all we can, and with all the helps we have, we find how few of us are virtuous This is saying a thing which all mankind know not to be true" BOSWELL "Is not modesty natural?" JOHNSON "I cannot say, Sir, as we find no people quite in a state of nature, but I think the more they are taught, the more modest they are. The French are a gross, ill-bred, untaught people, a lady there will spit on the floor and rub it with her foot. What I gained by being in France was, learning to be better satisfied with my own country. Time may be employed to more advantage from nineteen to twenty-four almost in any way than in

travelling; when you set travelling against mere negation, against doing nothing, it is better to be sure, but how much more would a young man improve were he to study during those years. Indeed, if a young man is wild, and must run after women and bad company, it is better this should be done abroad, as, on his return, he can break off such connections, and begin at home a new man, with a character to form, and acquaintances to make. How little does travelling supply to the conversation of any man who has travelled? how little to Beauclerk?" BOSWELL "What say you to Lord ——?"¹ JOHNSON "I never but once heard him talk of what he had seen, and that was of a large serpent in one of the Pyramids of Egypt." BOSWELL "Well, I happened to hear him tell the same thing, which made me mention him."

I talked of a country life—JOHNSON "Were I to live in the country I would not devote myself to the acquisition of popularity, I would live in a much better way, much more happily, I would have my time at my own command." BOSWELL "But, Sir, is it not a sad thing to be at a distance from all our literary friends?" JOHNSON "Sir, you will by and by have enough of this conversation, which now delights you so much."

As he was a zealous friend of subordination, he was at all times watchful to repress the vulgar cant against the manners of the great; "High people, Sir, (said he,) are the best; take a hundred ladies of quality, you'll find them better wives, better mothers, more willing to sacrifice their own pleasure to their children, than a hundred other women. Tradeswomen (I mean the wives of tradesmen) in the city, who are worth from ten to fifteen thousand pounds, are the worst creatures upon the earth, grossly ignorant, and thinking viciousness fashionable. Farmers, I think, are often worthless fellows. Few lords will cheat, and, if they do, they'll be ashamed of it. Farmers cheat and are not ashamed of it. They have all the sensual vices too of the nobility, with cheating into the bargain. There is as much fornication and adultery amongst farmers as amongst noblemen." BOSWELL "The notion of the world, Sir, however is, that the morals of women of quality are worse than those in lower stations." JOHNSON "Yes, Sir, the licentiousness of one woman of quality makes more noise than that of a number of women in lower stations, then, Sir, you are to consider the malignity of women in the city against women of quality, which will make them believe any thing of them, such as that they call

¹ Referring to Lord Charlemont, who, the story rather too often Mr Croker heard, was fond of repeating

their coachmen to bed No, Sir, so far as I have observed, the higher in rank, the richer ladies are, they are the better instructed and the more virtuous "

This year the Reverend Mr Horne published his "Letter to Mr. Dunning, on the English Particle," Johnson read it, and though not treated in it with sufficient respect, he had candour enough to say to Mr Seward, "Were I to make a new edition of my Dictionary, I would adopt several * of Mr. Horne's etymologies, I hope they did not put the dog in the pillory for his libel, he has too much literature for that "

On Saturday, May 16, I dined with him at Mr Beauclerk's, with Mr Langton, Mr Steevens, Dr Higgins, and some others I regret very feelingly every instance of my remissness in recording his *memorabilia*, I am afraid it is the condition of humanity (as Mr. Windham, of Norfolk, once observed to me, after having made an admirable speech in the House of Commons, which was highly applauded, but which he afterwards perceived might have been better) "that we are more uneasy from thinking of our wants, than happy in thinking of our acquisitions " This is an unreasonable mode of disturbing our tranquillity, and should be corrected, let me then comfort myself with the large treasure of Johnson's conversation which I have preserved for my own enjoyment and that of the world, and let me exhibit what I have upon each occasion, whether more or less, whether a bulse, or only a few sparks of diamond.

He said, "Dr Mead lived more in the broad sun-shine of life than almost any man "

The disaster of General Burgoyne's army was then the common topick of conversation It was asked why piling their arms was insisted upon as a matter of such consequence, when it seemed to be a circumstance so inconsiderable in itself JOHNSON "Why, Sir, a French authour says, '*Il y a beaucoup de puerilités dans la guerre*' All distinctions are trifles, because great things can seldom occur, and those distinctions are settled by custom. A savage would as willingly have his meat sent to him in the kitchen, as eat it at the table here, as men become civilised, various modes of denoting honourable preference are invented."

He this day made the observations upon the similarity between

* In Mr Horne Tooke's enlargement of that "Letter," which he has since published with the title of "*Евекъ преросвета*," or, the Diversions of Purley," he mentions this compliment, as if Dr Johnson instead of *several* of his etymologies had said *all* His recollection having thus magnified it, shews how ambitious he was of the approbation of so great a man

"Rasselas" and "Candide," which I have inserted in its proper place, when considering his admirable philosophical Romance. He said "*Candide*" he thought had more power in it than any thing that *Voltaire* had written.

He said, "The lyrical part of Horace never can be perfectly translated, so much of the excellence is in the numbers and the expression. Francis has done it the best, I'll take his, five out of six, against them all."

On Sunday, May 17, I presented to him Mr Fullarton, of Fullarton, who has since distinguished himself so much in India, to whom he naturally talked of travels, as Mr Brydone accompanied him in his tour to Sicily and Malta. He said, "The information, which we have from modern travellers is much more authentick than what we had from ancient travellers, ancient travellers guessed, modern travellers measure. The Swiss admit that there is but one error in Stanyan. If Brydone were more attentive to his Bible, he would be a good traveller."

He said, "Lord Chatham was a Dictator, he possessed the power of putting the State in motion; now there is no power, all order is relaxed." BOSWELL "Is there no hope of a change to the better?" JOHNSON "Why, yes, Sir, when we are weary of this relaxation. So the City of London will appoint its Mayors again by seniority." BOSWELL "But is not that taking a mere chance for having a good or a bad Mayor?" JOHNSON "Yes, Sir; but the evil of competition is greater than that of the worst Mayor that can come, besides, there is no more reason to suppose that the choice of a rabble will be right, than that chance will be right."

On Tuesday, May 19, I was to set out for Scotland in the evening. He was engaged to dine with me at Mr Dilly's, I waited upon him to remind him of his appointment and attend him thither, he gave me some salutary counsel, and recommended vigorous resolution against any deviation from moral duty. BOSWELL "But you would not have me to bind myself by a solemn obligation?" JOHNSON (much agitated) "What! a vow—O, no, Sir, a vow is a horrible thing, it is a snare for sin. The man who cannot go to Heaven without a vow—may go—" Here, standing erect, in the middle of his library, and rolling grand, his pause was truly a curious compound of the solemn and the ludicrous, he half-whistled in his usual way, when pleasant, and he paused, as if checked by religious awe—Methought he would have added—to Hell—but was restrained. I humoured the dilemma "What! Sir, (said I,) '*In calum jussuris ibit*,' " alluding to his imitation of it,

"And bid him go to Hell, to Hell he goes."

I had mentioned to him a slight fault in his noble "Imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal," a too near recurrence of the verb *spread*, in his description of the young Enthusiast at College:

"Through all his veins the fever of renown,
Spreads from the strong contagion of the gown;
 O'er Bodley's dome his future labours *spread*,
 And Bacon's mansion trembles o'er his head"

He had desired me to change *spreads* to *burns*, but for perfect authenticity, I now had it done with his own hand*. I thought this alteration not only cured the fault, but was more poetical, as it might carry an illusion to the shirt by which Hercules was inflamed.

We had a quiet comfortable meeting at Mr Dilly's, nobody there but ourselves, Mr Dilly mentioned somebody having wished that Milton's "Tractate on Education" should be printed along with his Poems in the edition of the English Poets then going on. JOHNSON "It would be breaking in upon the plan, but would be of no great consequence. So far as it would be any thing it would be wrong. Education in England has been in danger of being hurt by two of its greatest men, Milton and Locke. Milton's plan is impracticable, and I suppose has never been tried. Locke's, I fancy has been tried often enough, but is very imperfect, it gives too much to one side, and too little to the other, it gives too little to literature. I shall do what I can for Dr Watts, but my materials are very scanty. His poems are by no means his best works, I cannot praise his poetry itself highly, but I can praise its design."

My illustrious friend and I parted with assurances of affectionate regard.

Johnson maintained a long and intimate friendship with Mr. Welch, who succeeded the celebrated Henry Fielding as one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for Westminster, kept a regular office for the police of that great district, and discharged his important trust, for many years, faithfully and ably. Johnson, who had an eager and unceasing curiosity to know human life in all its variety, told me, that he attended Mr Welch in his office for a whole winter, to hear the examinations of the culprits, but that he found an almost uniform tenor of misfortune, wretchedness, and profligacy. Mr. Welch's health being impaired, he was advised to

* The slip of paper on which he made the correction, is deposited by me in the noble library to which it relates, and to which I have presented other pieces of his hand-writing.

Second Edition.—Line 28. This paragraph, and the letter following, with the next paragraph, are shifted back to p. 248, and the words after "literature," line 6, next page, omitted.

try the effect of a warm climate, and Johnson, by his interest with Mr Chamier, procured him leave of absence to go to Italy, and a promise that the pension or salary of two hundred pounds a year, which Government allowed him, should not be discontinued. Mr Welch accordingly went abroad, accompanied by his daughter Anne, a young lady of uncommon talents and literature. I have been fortunate enough, as this work was passing through the press, to obtain the following letter; which, although the first part of my narrative of this year was printed off before I received it, will now come in with very little deviation from chronological order.

To SAUNDERS WELCH, Esq at the English Coffee-house, ROME

"DEAR SIR,—To have suffered one of my best and dearest friends to pass almost two years in foreign countries without a letter, has a very shameful appearance of inattention. But the truth is, that there was no particular time in which I had any thing particular to say, and general expressions of good will, I hope, our long friendship is grown too solid to want

"Of publick affairs you have information from the news-papers wherever you go, for the English keep no secret, and of other things, Mrs. Nollekens informs you. My intelligence could therefore be of no use, and Miss Nancy's letters made it unnecessary to write to you for information. I was likewise for some time out of humour, to find that motion, and nearer approaches to the sun, did not restore your health so fast as I expected. Of your health, the accounts have lately been more pleasing, and I have the gratification of imagining to myself a length of years which I hope you have gained, and of which the enjoyment will be improved, by a vast accession of images and observations which your journeys and various residence have enabled you to make and accumulate. You have travelled with this felicity, almost peculiar to yourself, that your companion is not to part from you at your journey's end, but you are to live on together, to help each other's recollection, and to supply each other's omissions. The world has few greater pleasures than that which two friends enjoy, in tracing back, at some distant time, those transactions and events through which they have passed together. One of the old man's miseries is, that he cannot easily find a companion able to partake with him of the past. You and your fellow-traveller have this comfort in store, that your conversation will be not easily exhausted, one will always be glad to say what the other will always be willing to hear.

"That you may enjoy this pleasure long, your health must have your constant attention. I suppose you purpose to return this year

There is no need of haste do not come hither before the height of summer, that you may fall gradually into the inconveniences of your native climate July seems to be the proper month August and September will prepare you for the winter After having travelled so far to find health, you must take care not to lose it at home, and I hope a little care will effectually preserve it.

"Miss Nancy has doubtless kept a constant and copious journal. She must not expect to be welcome when she returns without a great mass of information. Let her review her journal often, and set down what she finds herself to have omitted, that she may trust to memory as little as possible, for memory is soon confused by a quick succession of things, and she will grow every day less confident of the truth of her own narrative, unless she can recur to some written memorials If she has satisfied herself with hints, instead of full representations, let her supply the deficiencies now while her memory is yet fresh, and while her father's memory may help her. If she observes this direction, she will not have travelled in vain, for she will bring home a book with which she may entertain herself to the end of life If it were not now too late, I would advise her to note the impression which the first sight of any thing new and wonderful made upon her mind Let her now set her thoughts down as she can recollect them, for faint as they may already be, they will grow every day fainter

"Perhaps I do not flatter myself unreasonably when I imagine that you may wish to know something of me. I can gratify your benevolence with no account of health The hand of time, or of disease, is very heavy upon me I pass restless and uneasy nights, harrassed with convulsions of my breast, and flatulencies at my stomach, and restless nights make heavy days But nothing will be mended by complaints, and therefore I will make an end When we meet, we will try to forget our cares and our maladies, and contribute, as we can, to the cheerfulness of each other If I had gone with you, I believe I should have been better, but I do not know that it was in my power. I am, dear Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"Feb 3, 1778"

This letter, while it gives admirable advice how to travel to the best advantage, and will therefore be of very general use, is another eminent proof of Johnson's warm and affectionate heart.*

* The friendship between Mr Welch and him was unbroken Mr Welch died not many months before him, and bequeathed him five guineas for a rug, which

I wrote to him on the 25th of May, from Thorpe, in Yorkshire, one of the seats of Mr Bosville, and gave him an account of my having passed a day at Lincoln, unexpectedly, and therefore without having any letters of introduction, but that I had been honoured with civilities from the Reverend Mr Simpson, an acquaintance of his, and Captain Broadley, of the Lincolnshire Militia; but more particularly from the Reverend Dr. Gordon, the Chancellor, who first received me with great politeness as a stranger, and when I had informed him who I was, entertained me at his house with the most flattering attention, I also expressed the pleasure with which I had found that our worthy friend Langton was highly esteemed in his own county town

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON

“Edinburgh, June 18, 1778

“MY DEAR SIR,—

* * * * *

“Since my return to Scotland, I have been again at Lanark, and have had more conversation with Thomson's sister. It is strange that Murdoch, who was his intimate friend, should have mistaken his mother's maiden name, which he says was Hume, whereas Hume was the name of his grandmother by the mother's side. His mother's name was Beatrix Trotter,* a daughter of Mr Trotter, of Fogo, a small proprietor of land. Thomson had one brother, whom he had with him in England as his amanuensis; but he was seized with a consumption, and having returned to Scotland, to try what his native air would do for him, died young. He had three sisters, one married to Mr. Bell, minister of the parish of Strathaven, one to Mr. Craig, father of the ingenious architect, who gave the plan of the New Town of Edinburgh, and one to Mr. Thomson, master of the grammar-school at Lanark. He was of a humane and benevolent disposition, not only sent valuable presents to his sisters, but an yearly allowance in money, and was always wishing to have it in his power to do them more good. Lord Lyttelton's observation, that ‘he lothed much to write,’ was very true. His letters to his sister, Mrs Thomson, were not frequent, and in one of them he says, ‘All my friends who know me, know how backward I am to write letters, and never impute the negli-

Johnson received with tenderness, as a kind memorial. His regard was constant for his friend Mr Welch's daughters, of whom, Jane is married to Mr Nollekens the statuary, whose merit is too well known to require any praise from me.

* Dr. Johnson was by no means attentive to minute accuracy in his “*Lives of the Poets*,” for notwithstanding my having detected this mistake, he has continued it.

gence of my hand to the coldness of my heart.' I send you a copy of the last letter which she had from him, she never heard that he had any intention of going into holy orders. From this late interview with his sister, I think much more favourably of him, as I hope you will. I am eager to see more of your Prefaces to the Poets, I solace myself with the few proof-sheets which I have.

"I send another parcel of Lord Hailes's '*Annals*,' which you will please to return to me as soon as you conveniently can. He says, 'he wishes you would cut a little deeper,' but he may be proud that there is so little occasion to use the critical knife. I ever am, my dear Sir,

"Your faithful and affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL "

Mr Langton has been pleased, at my request, to favour me with some particulars of Dr Johnson's visit to Warley Camp, where this gentleman was at the time stationed, as a Captain in the Lincolnshire militia. I shall give them in his own words in a letter to me.

"It was in the summer of the year 1778, that he complied with my invitation to come down to the Camp at Warley, and he staid with me about a week, the scene appeared, notwithstanding a great degree of ill health that he seemed to labour under, to interest and amuse him, as agreeing with the disposition that I believe you know he constantly manifested towards enquiring into subjects of the military kind. He sat, with a patient degree of attention, to observe the proceedings of a regimental court martial, that happened to be called in the time of his stay with us;¹ and one night, as late as at eleven o'clock, he accompanied the Major of the regiment in going what are styled the *Rounds*, where he might observe the forms of visiting the guards, for the seeing that they and their sentries are ready in their duty on their several posts. He took occasion to converse at times on military topics, one in particular, that I see the mention of, in your '*Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*,' which lies open before me," as to gun-powder, which he spoke of to the same effect, in part, that you relate.

"On one occasion, when the regiment were going through their exercise, he went quite close to the men at one of the extremities of it, and watched all their practices attentively, and, when he came away, his remark was, 'The men indeed do load their musquets and

^a Third Edition, p. 111.

¹ An admirable subject for a painter

fire with wonderful celerity.' He was likewise particular in requiring to know what was the weight of the musquet-balls in use, and within what distance they might be expected to take effect when fired off.

"In walking among the tents, and observing the difference between those of the officers and private men, he said that the superiority of accommodation of the better conditions of life, to that of the inferiour ones, was never exhibited to him in so distinct a view. The civilities paid to him in the camp were, from the gentlemen of the Lincolnshire regiment, one of the officers of which accommodated him with a tent in which he slept; and from General Hall, who very courteously invited him to dine with him, where he appeared to be very well pleased with his entertainment, and the civilities he received on the part of the General,* the attention likewise of the General's aid-de-camp, Captain Smith, seemed to be very welcome to him, as appeared by their engaging in a great deal of discourse together. The gentlemen of the East York regiment likewise on being informed of his coming, solicited his company at dinner, but by that time he had fixed his departure, so that he could not comply with the invitation."

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq

"DEAR SIR,—I have received two letters from you, of which the second complains of the neglect shown to the first. You must not tie your friends to such punctual correspondence. You have all possible assurances of my affection and esteem, and there ought to be no need of reiterated professions. When it may happen that I can give you either counsel or comfort, I hope it will never happen to me that I should neglect you, but you must not think me criminal or cold if I say nothing, when I have nothing to say.

"You are now happy enough. Mrs. Boswell is recovered, and I congratulate you upon the probability of her long life. If general approbation will add any thing to your enjoyment, I can tell you that I have heard you mentioned as *a man whom every body likes*. I think life has little more to give.

"——¹ has gone to his regiment. He has laid down his coach, and talks of making more contractions of his expence: how he will succeed I know not. It is difficult to reform a household gradually; it may be better done by a system totally new. I am

* When I one day at Court expressed to General Hall my sense of the honour he had done my friend, he politely answered, "Sir, I did *myself* honour."

¹ Langton.

afraid he has always something to hide. When we pressed him to go to ——,¹ he objected the necessity of attending his navigation,² yet he could talk of going to Aberdeen, a place not much nearer his navigation. I believe he cannot bear the thought of living at —— in a state of diminution; and of appearing among the gentlemen of the neighbourhood *shorn of his beams*. This is natural, but it is cowardly. What I told him of the encreasing expence of a growing family seems to have struck him. He certainly had gone on with very confused views, and we have, I think, shown him that he is wrong, though, with the common deficiency of advisers, we have not shown him how to do right.

"I wish you would a little correct or restrain your imagination, and imagine that happiness, such as life admits, may be had at other places as well as London. Without asserting Stoicism, it may be said, that it is our business to exempt ourselves as much as we can from the power of external things. There is but one solid basis of happiness, and that is, the reasonable hope of a happy futurity. This may be had every where.

"I do not blame your preference of London to other places, for it is really to be preferred, if the choice is free, but few have the choice of their place, or their manner of life, and mere pleasure ought not to be the prime motive of action.

"Mrs Thrale, poor thing, has a daughter. Mr Thrale dislikes the times, like the rest of us. Mrs Williams is sick, Mrs Desmoulin's is poor. I have miserable nights. Nobody is well but Mr Levett. I am, dear Sir,

"Your most, &c

"SAM JOHNSON.

"London, July 3, 1778"

In the course of this year there was a difference between him and his friend Mr. Strahan, the particulars of which it is unnecessary to relate. Their reconciliation was communicated to me in a letter from Mr. Strahan, in the following words:

"The notes I shewed you that past between him and me were dated in March last. The matter lay dormant till July 27, when he wrote to me as follows:

To WILLIAM STRAHAN, Esq.

'SIR,—It would be very foolish for us to continue strangers any longer. You can never by persistency make wrong right.

¹ Langton

² His "navigation," as Mr Croker

shows, refers to a canal in which he was interested

If I resented too acrimoniously, I resented only to yourself Nobody ever saw or heard what I wrote. You saw that my anger was over, for in a day or two I came to your house. I have given you longer time, and I hope you have made so good use of it, as to be no longer on evil terms with, Sir,

‘Your, &c

‘SAM JOHNSON’

On this I called upon him, and he has since dined with me.”

After this time, the same friendship as formerly continued between Dr Johnson and Mr. Strahan. My friend mentioned to me a little circumstance of his attention, which, though we may smile at it, must be allowed to have its foundation in a nice and true knowledge of human life. “When I write to Scotland, (said he,) I employ Strahan to frank my letters, that he may have the consequence of appearing a Parliament-man among his countrymen.”

To CAPTAIN LANGTON, at Warley Camp*

“DEAR SIR,—When I recollect how long ago I was received with so much kindness at Warley Common, I am ashamed that I have not made some enquiries after my friends

“Pray how many sheep-stealers did you convict? and how did you punish them? When are you to be cantoned in better habitations? The air grows cold, and the ground damp. Longer stay in the camp cannot be without much danger to the health of the common men, if even the officers can escape

“You see that Dr. Percy is now Dean of Carlisle, about five hundred a year, with a power of presenting himself to some good living. He is provided for.

“The session of the club is to commence with that of the parliament. Mr Banks desires to be admitted, he will be a very honourable accession

“Did the King please you? The Coxheath men, I think, have some reason to complain: Reynolds says your camp is better than theirs.

“I hope you find yourself able to encounter this weather. Take care of your own health, and, as you can, of your men. Be pleased to make my compliments to all the gentlemen whose notice I have had, and whose kindness I have experienced. I am, dear Sir,

“Your most humble servant,

“Oct 31, 1778”

“SAM. JOHNSON

* Dr Johnson here addresses his worthy friend, Bennet Langton, Esq. by his title, as a Captain of the Lincolnshire militia

I wrote to him on the 18th of August, the 18th of September, and the 6th of November, informing him of my having had another son born, whom I had called James; that I had passed some time at Auchinleck, that the Countess of Loudoun, now in her ninety-ninth year, was as fresh as when he saw her, and remembered him with respect; and that his mother by adoption, the Countess of Eglintoune, had said to me, "Tell Mr Johnson I love him exceedingly," that I had again suffered much from bad spirits, and that as it was very long since I heard from him, I was not a little uneasy

The continuance of his regard for his friend Dr. Burney, appears from the following letters.

To the Reverend Dr WHEFLER, Oxford.

"DEAR SIR—Dr Burney, who brings this paper, is engaged in a History of Musick, and having been told by Dr Maikham of some MSS. relating to his subject, which are in the library of your College, is desirous to examine them. He is my friend, and therefore I take the liberty of intreating your favour and assistance in his enquiry, and can assure you, with great confidence, that if you knew him he would not want any intervenient solicitation to obtain the kindness of one who loves learning and virtue as you love them

"I have been flattering myself all the summer with the hope of paying my annual visit to my friends, but something has obstructed me, I still hope not to be long without seeing you. I should be glad of a little literary talk, and glad to shew you, by the frequency of my visits, how eagerly I love it, when you talk it. I am, dear Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"London, Nov 2, 1778"

To the Reverend Dr EDWARDS, Oxford.

"SIR,—The bearer, Dr Burney, has had some account of a Welsh Manuscript in the Bodleian library, from which he hopes to gain some materials for his History of Musick, but, being ignorant of the language, is at a loss where to find assistance. I make no doubt but you, Sir, can help him through his difficulties, and therefore take the liberty of recommending him to your favour, as I am sure you will find him a man worthy of every civility that can be shewn, and every benefit that can be conferred.

"But we must not let Welsh drive us from Greek. What comes of Xenophon? If you do not like the trouble of publishing the book, do not let your commentaries be lost, contrive that they may be published somewhere I am, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"London, Nov 2, 1778 "

These letters procured Dr Burney great kindness and friendly offices from both of these gentlemen, not only on that occasion, but in future visits to the university. The same year Dr. Johnson not only wrote to Dr Joseph Warton in favour of Dr. Burney's youngest son, who was to be placed in the college there, but accompanied him to Winchester, when he went thither.

We surely cannot but admire the benevolent exertions of this great and good man, especially when we consider how grievously he was afflicted with bad health, and how uncomfortable his home was made by the perpetual jarring of those whom he charitably accommodated under his roof. He has sometimes suffered me to talk jocularly of his groupe of females, and call them his *Seraglio*. He thus mentions them, together with honest Levett, in one of his letters to Mrs Thrale. "Williams hates every body, Levett hates Desmoulins, and does not love Williams, Desmoulins hates them both, Poll^b loves none of them "

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—It is indeed a long time since I wrote, and I think you have some reason to complain, however, you must not let small things disturb you, when you have such a fine addition to your happiness as a new boy, and I hope your lady's health restored by bringing him. It seems very probable that a little care will now restore her, if any remains of her complaints are left.

"You seem, if I understand your letter, to be gaining ground at Auchinleck, an incident that would give me great delight.

* * * * *

"When any fit of anxiety, or gloominess, or perversion of mind, lays hold upon you, make it a rule not to publish it by complaints, but exert your whole care to hide it, by endeavouring to hide it, you will drive it away. Be always busy.

"The Club is to meet with the parliament; we talk of electing Banks, the traveller; he will be a reputable member.

"Langton has been encamped with his company of militia on Warley-common, I spent five days amongst them, he signalized himself as a diligent officer, and has very high respect in the regiment. He presided when I was there at a court-martial; he is now quartered in Hertfordshire, his lady and little ones are in Scotland Paoli came to the camp and commended the soldiers

"Of myself I have no great matter to say, my health is not restored, my nights are restless and tedious. The best night that I have had these twenty years was at Fort-Augustus

"I hope soon to send you a few lines to read I am, dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate,

"Nov 21, 1778"

"SAM. JOHNSON.

About this time Mr John Hussey, who had been some time in trade, and is now a clergyman of the Church of England, being about to undertake a journey to Aleppo, and other parts of the East, which he accomplished, Dr. Johnson honoured him with the following letter.

To Mr. JOHN HUSSEY.

"DEAR SIR,—I have sent you the 'Grammar,' and have left you two books more, by which I hope to be remembered, write my name in them, we may perhaps see each other no more, you part with my good wishes, nor do I despair of seeing you return Let no opportunities of vice corrupt you, let no bad example seduce you, let the blindness of Mahometans confirm you in Christianity. God bless you. I am, dear Sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

"Dec. 29 1778"

"SAM JOHNSON

Johnson this year expressed great satisfaction at the publication of the first volume of "Discourses to the Royal Academy," by Sir Joshua Reynolds, whom he always considered as one of his literary

* Notwithstanding all my anxious attention to chronological order, I find that I have ascribed to this year (see page 246,) the publication of his Prefaces to the Poets, which in fact came out early in the next year¹

Second Edition —Delete above note

Cor et Ad —Line 13 *read*—"the Reverend Mr John Hussey"

Ibid —Line 14 For 'is now' *read* "was then

Ibid —Line 16 After "Johnson" *read* "with whom he had long been in habits of intimacy"²

¹ A fresh proof that Mr Baldwin's printers did not deserve Mr Boswell's high praise, as this note is not referred to in the text The reference is probably from the words "few lines to read"

² Malone has shaped the sentence thus — "(who had long been in habits of intimacy with him)" This is a fair specimen of what Boswell and editors called "settling the text"

school. Much praise indeed is due to those excellent Discourses, which are so universally admired, and for which the authour lately received from the Empress of Russia a gold snuff-box, adorned with her profile in *bas relief*, set in diamonds, and containing what is infinitely more valuable, a slip of paper, on which are written with her Imperial Majesty's own hand, the following words. "*Pour le Chevalier Reynolds en temoignage du contentement que j'ai ressentie à la lecture de ses excellens discours sur la peinture*"

In 1779, Johnson proceeded, at intervals, in writing his "Lives of the Poets"

On the 22nd of January, I wrote to him on several topicks, and mentioned that as he had been so good as to permit me to have the proof sheets of his "Lives of the Poets," I had written to his servant, Francis, to take care of them for me.

Mr. BOSWELL to Dr. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Feb 2, 1779

"MY DEAR SIR,—Garrick's death is a striking event, not that we should be surprised with the death of any man, who has lived sixty-two years. But because there was a *vivacity* in our late celebrated friend, which drove away the thoughts of *death* from any association with *him*, I am sure you will be tenderly affected with his departure; and I would wish to hear from you upon the subject. I was obliged to him in my days of effervescence in London, when poor Dernick was my governour,¹ and since that time I received many civilities from him. Do you remember how pleasing it was, when I received a letter from him at Inverary, upon our first return to civilized living after our Hebridean journey. I shall always remember him with affection as well as admiration.

"On Saturday last, being the 30th of January, I drank coffee and

Second Edition—Line 9 The paragraph is removed, and the following substituted "This year, Johnson gave the world a luminous proof that the vigour of his mind in all its faculties, whether memory, judgement, or imagination, was not in the least abated, for this year came out the first four volumes of his 'Prefaces, biographical and critical, to the most eminent of the English Poets,'* published by the booksellers of London. The remaining volumes came out in the year 1780. The Poets were selected by the several booksellers who had the honorary copy right, which is still preserved among them by mutual compact, notwithstanding the decision of the House of Lords against the perpetuity of Literary Property. We have his own authority, that by his recommendation the poems of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden, were added to the collection. Of this work I shall speak more particularly hereafter."

¹ "Dernick was his governor, as he has pleasantly expressed it. Lord Eglington insisted that he should have an apartment

in his house, and introduced him to the great, the gay, and the ingenious."—*Memoir, Europ Mag*

old port, and had solemn conversation with the Reverend Mr. Falconer, a non-juring bishop, a very learned and worthy man. He gave two toasts, which you will believe I drank with cordiality, Dr. Samuel Johnson and Flora Macdonald. I sat about four hours with him, and it was really as if I had been living in the last century. The Episcopal Church of Scotland, though faithful to the royal house of Stuart, has never accepted of any *congé d'élire*, since the Revolution; it is the only true Episcopal Church in Scotland, as it has its own succession of bishops. For as to the episcopal clergy who take the oaths to the present government, they indeed follow the rites of the Church of England, but, as Bishop Falconer observed, they are not *Episcopals*, for they are under no bishop, as a bishop cannot have authority beyond his diocese.

"This venerable gentleman did me the honour to dine with me yesterday, and he laid his hands upon the heads of my little ones. We had a good deal of curious literary conversation, particularly about Mr. Thomas Ruddiman, with whom he lived in great friendship.

"Any fresh instance of the uncertainty of life makes one embrace more closely a valuable friend. My dear and much respected Sir, may God preserve you long in this world while I am in it. I am ever,

"Your much obliged,

"And affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

On the 23d of February I wrote to him again, complaining of his silence, as I had heard he was ill, and had written to Mr Thrale for information concerning him, and I announced my intention of soon being again in London.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—Why should you take such delight to make a bustle, to write to Mr Thrale that I am negligent, and to Francis to do what is so very unnecessary. Thrale, you may be sure, cared not about it,¹ and I shall spare Francis the trouble, by ordering a set both of the *Lives* and *Poets* to dear Mrs. Boswell,* in acknowledgement of her marmalade. Persuade her to accept them,

* He sent a set elegantly bound and gilt, which was received as a very handsome present

¹ "To be sure he did not"—Mrs FLEMING, *Marginalia*.

and accept them kindly. If I thought she would receive them scornfully, I would send them to Miss Boswell, who, I hope, has yet none of her mamma's ill-will to me.

"I would send sets of *Lives*, four volumes, to some other friends, to Lord Hailes first. His second volume lies by my bed-side, a book surely of great labour, and to every just thinker of great delight. Write me word to whom I shall send besides, would it please Lord Auchinleck? Mrs Thrale waits in the coach¹

"I am, dear Sir, &c

"SAM JOHNSON.

"March 13, 1779"

This letter crossed me on the road to London, where I arrived on Monday, March 15, and next morning at a late hour, found Dr. Johnson sitting over his tea, attended by Mrs Desmoulins Mr. Levett, and a clergyman, who had come to submit some poetical pieces to his revision. It is wonderful what a number and variety of writers, some of them even unknown to him, prevailed on his good-nature to look over their works, and suggest corrections and improvements. My arrival interrupted for a little while, the important business of this true representative of Bayes, upon its being resumed, I found that the subject under immediate consideration was a translation, yet in manuscript, of the *Carmen Seculare* of Horace, which had this year been set to music, and performed as a publick entertainment in London, for the joint benefit of Monsieur Philidor and Signor Baretta. When Johnson had done reading, the authour asked him bluntly, "If upon the whole it was a good translation?" Johnson, whose regard for truth was uncommonly strict, seemed to be puzzled for a moment, what answer to make, as he certainly could not honestly commend the performance with exquisite address he evaded the question thus, "Sir, I do not say that it may not be made a very good translation." Here nothing whatever in favour of the performance was affirmed, and yet the writer was not shocked. A printed "Ode to the Warlike Genius of Britain," came next in review, the bard was a lank bony figure, with short black hair, he was writhing himself in agitation, while Johnson read, and shewing his teeth in a grin of earnestness, exclaimed in broken sentences, and in a keen sharp tone, "Is that poetry, Sir?—Is it Pindar?"² JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, there is here

¹ "Which he cared no more for than her husband cared about Boswell's anxiety"—*Mrs Pown, Marginalia*.

² This admirable sketch, which does the highest credit to Boswell's powers of

observation, refers to a Mr Tasker, as Mr Croker learned from Mr D'Israeli. The description was so marvellously faithful, that by it he was enabled to recognize the clergyman at a watering-place.

a great deal of what is called poetry" Then turning to me, the poet cried, " My muse has not been long upon the town, and (pointing to the Ode) it trembles under the hand of the great critick " Johnson in a tone of displeasure asked him, " Why do you praise Anson ? " I did not trouble him by asking his reason for this question He proceeded, " Here is an errour, Sir, you have made Genius feminine "—" Palpable, Sir, (cried the enthusiast) I know it. But (in a lower tone) it was to pay a compliment to the Duchess of Devonshire, with which her Grace was pleased She is walking across Coxheath, in the military uniform, and I suppose her to be the Genius of Britain " JOHNSON " Sir, you are giving a reason for it, but that will not make it right You may have a reason why two and two should make five, but they will still make but four."

Although I was several times with him in the course of the following days, such it seems were my occupations, or such my negligence, that I have preserved no memorial of his conversation till Friday, March 26, when I visited him He said he expected to be attacked on account of his "Lives of the Poets." "However (said he) I would rather be attacked than unnoticed For the worst thing you can do to an authour is to be silent as to his works. An assault upon a town is a bad thing, but starving it is still worse, an assault may be unsuccessful, you may have more men killed than you kill, but if you starve the town you are sure of a victory "

Talking of a friend of our's associating with persons of very discordant principles and characters, I said he was a very universal man, quite a man of the world. JOHNSON "Yes, Sir, but one may be so much a man of the world as to be nothing in the world I remember a passage in Goldsmith's 'Vicar of Wakefield,' which he was afterwards fool enough to expunge: 'I do not love a man who is zealous for nothing' " BOSWELL. "That was a fine passage " JOHNSON "Yes, Sir there was another fine passage too, which he struck out: 'When I was a young man, being anxious to distinguish myself, I was perpetually starting new propositions But I soon gave this over, for, I found that generally what was new was false' " I said I did not like to sit with people of whom I had not a good opinion JOHNSON "But you must not indulge your delicacy too much, or you will be a *tête à tête* man all your life."

¹ "Dr Burney," says Malone, "in a note introduced in a former page, has mentioned this circumstance, concerning Goldsmith, as communicated to him

by Dr Johnson, not recollecting that it occurred here " The remark, however, does occur in the novel.

During my stay in London, this spring, I find I was unaccountably negligent in preserving Johnson's sayings, more so than at any time when I was happy enough to have an opportunity of hearing his wisdom and wit. There is no help for it now. I must content myself with presenting such scraps as I have. But I am nevertheless ashamed and vexed to think how much has been lost. It is not that there was a bad crop this year, but that I was not sufficiently careful in gathering it in. I, therefore, in some instances can only exhibit a few detached fragments.

Talking of the wonderful concealment of the authour of the celebrated letters signed *Junius*, he said, "I should have believed Burke to be Junius, because I know no man but Burke who is capable of writing these letters, but Burke spontaneously denied it to me. The case would have been different had I asked him if he was the authour, a man so questioned, as to an anonymous publication, may think he has a right to deny it."

He observed that his old friend, Mr Sheridan, had been honoured with extraordinary attention in his own country, by having had an exception made in his favour in an Irish Act of Parliament concerning insolvent debtors. "To be thus singled out (said he) by a legislature, as an object of publick consideration and kindness, is a proof of no common merit!"

¹ There has been a singular misconception as to this transaction. Mr Croker says bluntly that "Johnson had been misinformed." Samuel Whyte, in his *Miscellany*, p. 29, while attempting to confute Johnson's statement, proves that he is substantially right. The course was, that a debtor petitioning the Parliament should have his petition signed by a number of his creditors. Whyte, who presented the petition in Sheridan's absence, could not, up to the last moment, succeed in getting a single name. George Faulkner, who had promised to sign, refused. What followed is thus described —

"JOHN MONCK MASON, Esq. in the Chair

"The late Lord Viscount Doneraile, and the present Lord Viscount Northland, his earliest and most steady patrons, then in the Commons, received him (Whyte) at the door, and taking him by the hand announced him to the Committee, saying, 'Here comes the worthy Petitioner for Mr Sheridan.' This was an encouraging reception, and the prelude to a more signal instance of favour

in the sequel. Standing at the foot of the table, the Book, as is the usage, was handed to him, but the test of an Affidavit was dispensed with.

"Mr Tottenham immediately rose, and addressing the Chair, expatiated at some length on the purport of the Petition before them, and the extraordinary circumstance of its introduction to the House. A Creditor petitioning the Legislature in behalf of his Debtor, he observed, was very much out of the usual course, and the single instance of the kind, he believed, that ever solicited the attention of Parliament. Among other encomiums, of which he was by no means sparing, he said, it was a spirited and laudable exertion of friendship, evidently proceeding from a disinterested principle, and in his opinion merited particular consideration and respect, adding, '*I therefore move you, that Petitioner shall not be put to his OATH, but the Facts set forth in his Petition be admitted simply on his word.*' His motion was seconded by an instantaneous, Ay! Ay! without a dissenting voice. A few questions were then put, purely as it were for form's sake, and

At Streatham, on Monday, March 29, at breakfast he maintained that a father had no right to control the inclinations of his daughters in marriage

On Wednesday, March 31, when I visited him, and confessed an excess of which I had very seldom been guilty, that I had spent a whole night in playing at cards, and that I could not look back on it with satisfaction. Instead of a harsh animadversion, he mildly said, "Alas, Sir, on how few things can we look back with satisfaction"

On Thursday, April 1, he commended one of the Dukes of Devonshire for "a dogged veracity"^a He said too, "London is nothing to some people, but to a man whose pleasure is intellectual, London is the place. And there is no place where æconomy can be so well practised as in London More can be had here for the money, even by ladies, than any where else You cannot play tricks with your fortune in a small place, you must make an uniform appearance Here a lady may have well-furnished apartments, and elegant dress, without any meat in her kitchen"

I was amused by considering with how much ease and coolness he could write or talk to a friend, exhorting him not to suppose that happiness was not to be found as well in other places as in London; when he himself was at all times sensible of its being, comparatively speaking, a heaven upon earth The truth is, that by those who from sagacity, attention, and experience, have learnt the full advantage of London, its pre-eminence over every other place, not only for variety of enjoyment, but for comfort, will be felt with a philosophical exultation The freedom from remark and petty censure, with which life may be passed there, is a circumstance which a man who knows the teasing restraint of a narrow circle must relish highly. Mr Burke, whose orderly and amiable domestic habits might make the eye of observation less irksome to him than to most men, said once very pleasantly, in my hearing, "Though I have the honour to represent Bristol, I should not like to live there, I should be obliged to be so much *upon my good behaviour*" In London, a man may live in splendid society at one time, and in frugal retirement another, without animadversion.

^a See p 228 of this Volume.

Petitioner was dismissed with repeated testimonies of applause and congratulations of success"

It is to this compliment that Johnson alludes Mr Croker refers to the *Sche-*

dule to the Irish Statutes, where he finds Sheridan's name, with 120 others, and argues that an "attention" extended to so many, would not have been much of an indulgence This would have been the reverse of a compliment.

There, and there alone, a man's own house is truly his *castle*, in which he can be in perfect safety from intrusion whenever he pleases. I never shall forget how well this was expressed to me one day by Mr Meynell: "The chief advantage of London (said he) is, that a man is always *so near his burrow*."

He said of one of his old acquaintances, "He is very fit for a travelling governour. He knows French very well. He is a man of good principles; and there would be no danger that a young gentleman should catch his manner, for it is so very bad, that it must be avoided. In that respect he would be like the drunken Helot"

On Friday, April 2, being Good-Friday, I visited him in the morning as usual, and finding that we insensibly fell into a train of ridicule upon the foibles of one of our friends, a very worthy man, I, by way of a check, quoted some good admonition from "The Government of the Tongue," that very pious book. It happened also remarkably enough, that the subject of the sermon preached to us to-day by Dr Burrows, the rector of St Clement Danes, upon the certainty that at the last day we must give an account of "the deeds done in the body," and, amongst various acts of culpability he mentioned evil-speaking. As we were moving slowly along in the croud from church, Johnson joggled my elbow, and said, "Did you attend to the sermon?"—"Yes, Sir, (said I,) it was very applicable to us" He, however, stood upon the defensive "Why, Sir, the sense of ridicule is given us, and may be lawfully used. The authour of 'The Government of the Tongue' would have us to treat all men alike"

In the interval between morning and evening service, he endeavoured to employ himself earnestly in devotional exercises, and, as he has mentioned in his "Prayers and Meditations,"^a gave me "*Les Pensées de Pascal*," that I might not interrupt him. I preserve the book with reverence. His presenting it to me is marked upon it with his own hand, and I have found in it a truly divine unction. We went to church again in the afternoon

On Saturday, April 3, I visited him at night, and found him sitting in Mrs Williams's room, with her, and one who he after-

^a Page 173

Second Edition—At line 10 add, "A gentleman has informed me, that Johnson said of the same person, 'Sir, he has the most *inverted* understanding of any man whom I have ever known'"

¹ Mr Croker thinks Elphinstone is intended, but the description applies forcibly to Baretti

² On this passage Mrs Piozza writes, in the margin, "I have a notion it was

the Rev Mr Mence, of whom I heard Johnson say to old Burney, 'Sir, Mence is a man who should be stuck upon a pole and a large writing under him to say, Do nothing as Mence does it.'"

wards told me was a natural son of the second Lord Southwell.¹ The table had a singular appearance, being covered with a heterogeneous assemblage of oysters and porter for his company, and tea for himself. I mentioned my having heard an eminent physician, who was himself a Christian, argue in favour of universal toleration, and maintain, that no man could be hurt by another man's differing from him in opinion. JOHNSON. "Sir, you are to a certain degree hurt by knowing that even one man does not believe."

On Easter-day, after solemn service at St. Paul's, I dined with him. Mr Allen the printer was also his guest. He was uncommonly silent, and I have not written down any thing, except a single curious fact, which, having the sanction of his inflexible veracity, may be received as a striking instance of human insensibility and inconsideration. As he was passing by a fishmonger who was skinning an eel alive, he heard him "curse it, because it would not lye still."

On Wednesday, April 7, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's. I have not marked what company was there. Johnson harangued upon the qualities of different liquors, and spoke with great contempt of claret, as so weak, that "a man would be drowned by it before it made him drunk." He was persuaded to drink one glass of it, that he might judge, not from recollection, which might be dim, but from immediate sensation. He shook his head, and said, "Poor stuff. No, Sir, claret is the liquor for boys, port, for men; but he who aspires to be a hero (smiling) must drink brandy. In the first place, the flavour of brandy is most grateful to the palate, and then brandy will do soonest for a man what drinking *can* do for him. There are, indeed, few who are able to drink brandy. That is a power rather to be wished for than attained. And yet (proceeded he) as in all pleasure hope is a considerable part, I know not but fruition comes too quick by brandy. Florence wine I think the worst, it is wine only to the eye, it is wine neither while you are drinking it, nor after you have drunk it, it neither pleases the taste, nor exhilarates the spirits." I reminded him how heartily he and I used to drink wine together when we were first acquainted; and how I used to have a head ache after sitting up with him. He did not like to have this recalled, or, perhaps, thinking that I boasted improperly, resolved to have a witty stroke at me. "Nay, Sir, it was not the *wine* that made your head ache, but the *sense* that I put into it." BOSWELL. "What, Sir! will sense make the head ache?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, (with a smile) when

¹ Maurice Lowe, the painter

it is not used to it" No man who has a true relish of pleasantry could be offended at this, especially if Johnson in a long intimacy had given him repeated proofs of his regard and good estimation. I used to say, that as he had given me a thousand pounds in praise, he had a good right now and then to take a guinea from me.

On Thursday, April 8, I dined with him at Mr. Allan Ramsay's, with Lord Graham and some other company. We talked of Shakspeare's witches. JOHNSON. "They are beings of his own creation; they are a compound of malignity and meanness, without any abilities, and are quite different from the Italian magician. King James says, in his 'Dæmonology,' 'Magicians command the devils; witches are their servants.' The Italian magicians are elegant beings." RAMSAY. "Opera witches, not Drury-lane witches." Johnson observed, that abilities might be employed in a narrow sphere, as in getting money, which he said he believed no man could do, without vigorous parts, though concentrated to a point. RAMSAY "Yes, like a strong horse in a mill he pulls better."

Lord Graham, while he praised the beauty of Lochlomond, on the banks of which is his family seat, complained of the climate, and said he could not bear it. JOHNSON "Nay, my Lord, don't talk so. you may bear it well enough. Your ancestors have borne it more years than I can tell." This was a handsome compliment to the antiquity of the house of Montrose. His Lordship told me afterwards, that he had only affected to complain of the climate, lest, if he had spoken as favourably of his country as he really thought, Dr Johnson might have attacked it. Johnson was very courteous to Lady Margaret Macdonald. "Madam, (said he,) when I was in the Isle of Sky, I heard of the people running to take the stones off the road, lest Lady Margaret's horse should stumble."

Lord Graham commended Dr. Drummond at Naples, as a man of extraordinary talents, and added, that he had a great love of liberty. JOHNSON "He is *young*, my Lord, (looking to his Lordship with an arch smile) all boys love liberty, till experience convinces them they are not fit so to govern themselves as they imagined. We are all agreed as to our own liberty. we would have as much of it as we can get, but we are not agreed as to the liberty of others. for in proportion as we take, others must lose. I believe we hardly wish that the mob should have liberty to govern us. When that was the case some time ago, no man was at liberty not to have candles in his windows." RAMSAY. "The result is, that order is better than confusion." JOHNSON. "The result is, that order cannot be had but by subordination."

On Friday, April 16, I had been present at the trial of the unfor-

fortunate Mr. Hackman,¹ who, in a fit of frantick jealous love, had shot Miss Ray, the favourite of a nobleman² Johnson, in whose company I dined to day, with some other friends, was much interested by my account of what passed, and particularly with his prayer for the mercy of heaven. He said, in a solemn fervid tone, "I hope he *shall* find mercy"

This day a violent altercation arose between Johnson and Beauclerk, which having made much noise at the time, I think it proper, in order to prevent any future misrepresentation, to give a minute account of it.

In talking of Hackman, Johnson argued, as Judge Blackstone had done, that his being furnished with two pistols was a proof that he meant to shoot two persons. Mr Beauclerk said, "No, for that every wise man who intended to shoot himself, took two pistols, that he might be sure of doing it at once Lord ———'s cool shot himself with one pistol, and lived ten days in great agony. Mr. ———,³ who loved buttered muffins, but durst not eat them because they disagreed with his stomach, resolved to shoot himself,

¹ A letter appeared in the *St James' Chronicle* for April 17, from which the following is extracted — "I am just come from attending the Trial and Condemnation of the unfortunate Mr Hackman, who shot Miss Ray and I must own that I feel an unusual Depression of Spirits, joined with the Pangs which so solemn a warning of the dreadful effects that the passion of love must give all of us who have lively sensations and warm tempers

As his manners were uncommonly amiable, his mind and heart seem to have been uncommonly pure and virtuous. His case is one of the most remarkable that has ever occurred in the history of human nature, but it is by no means unnatural. The principle of it is very philosophically explained and illustrated in the *Hypocondriack*, a periodical paper peculiarly adapted to the people of England, and which now comes out monthly in the *London Magazine*." This self commendation is peculiarly piquant, considering that the letter is signed "J B"

It may be suspected, from the promise given to Mr Boswell's name that an account of the execution in that journal is from the same eminent hand. A little after five yesterday morning the Reverend Mr Hackman got up, dressed himself, and was at private meditation till near seven, when Mr Boswell and two other gentlemen waited on him, and accompanied him to the chapel. . . .

He was then conducted to a morning coach, attended by Mr Vilette the ordinary, Mr Boswell and Mr Davenport the sheriff's officer. On his arrival at Tyburn he got out of the coach, mounted the cart and took an affectionate leave of Mr Boswell and the ordinary. After some time spent in prayer he was tied up, and about ten minutes after eleven was launched into eternity.

When Mr Hackman got to the cart under the gallows, he immediately kneeled down, with his face towards the horses, and prayed some time. He then rose and joined in prayer with Mr Vilette and Mr Boswell about a quarter of an hour, when he desired to be permitted to have a few minutes to himself. His request being granted he informed the executioner when he was prepared he would drop his handkerchief as a signal accordingly, after praying about six or seven minutes to himself he dropped his handkerchief, and the cart drew from under him.

² Lord Sandwich

³ Mr Croker "ascertained" that Mr Fitzherbert was alluded to here, and not Mr Damer, who committed suicide in the year 1776. Yet it seems improbable that Beauclerk would enumerate the details of such a catastrophe to intimate friends of Fitzherbert, who must have been perfectly familiar with them.

and then he eat three buttered muffins for breakfast, before shooting himself, knowing that he should not be troubled with indigestion. *he* had two charged pistols, one was found lying charged upon the table by him, after he had shot himself with the other "— Well, (said Johnson, with an air of triumph,) you see here one pistol was sufficient." Beauclerk replied smartly, "Because it happened to kill him " And either then, or a very little afterwards, being piqued at Johnson's triumphant remark, added, "This is what you don't know, and I do." There was then a cessation of the dispute, and some minutes intervened, during which, dinner and the glass went on cheerfully; when Johnson suddenly and abruptly exclaimed, "Mr. Beauclerk, how came you to talk so petulantly to me, as 'This is what you don't know, but what I know?' One thing *I* know which *you* don't seem to know, that you are very uncivil." BEAUCLERK. "Because *you* began by being uncivil, (which you always are)" The words in parenthesis were, I believe, not heard by Dr Johnson. Here again there was a cessation of arms. Johnson told me, that the reason why he waited some time at first without taking any notice of what Mr Beauclerk said, was because he was thinking whether he should resent it. But when he considered that there were present a young Lord and an eminent traveller, two men of the world with whom he had never dined before, he was apprehensive that they might think they had a right to take such liberties with him as Beauclerk did, and therefore resolved he would not let it pass, adding, that "he would not appear a coward " A little while after this, the conversation turned on the violence of Hackman's temper. Johnson then said, "It was his business to *command* his temper, as my friend Mr Beauclerk should have done some time ago " BEAUCLERK. "I should learn of *you*, Sir " JOHNSON. "Sir, you have given *me* opportunities enough of learning, when I have been in *your* company. No man loves to be treated with contempt " BEAUCLERK (with a polite inclination towards Johnson) "Sir, you have known me twenty years, and however I may have treated others, you may be sure I could never treat you with contempt." JOHNSON. "Sir, you have said more than was necessary " Thus it ended, and Beauclerk's coach not having come for him till very late, Dr Johnson and another gentleman sat with him a long time after the rest of the company were gone; and he and I dined at Beauclerk's on the Saturday se'nnight following.

After this tempest had subsided, I recollect the following particulars of his conversation :

"I am always for getting a boy forward in his learning; for that is a sure good. I would let him at first read *any* English book

which happens to engage his attention; because you have done a great deal when you have brought him to have entertainment from a book. He'll get better books afterwards "

" Mallot, I believe, never wrote a single line of his projected Life of the Duke of Marlborough. He groped for materials, and thought of it, till he had exhausted his mind. Thus it sometimes happens that men entangle themselves in their own schemes "

" To be contradicted, in order to force you to talk, is mighty unpleasant. You *shine*, indeed, but it is by being *ground* "

Of a gentleman who made some figure among the *Literati* of his time, he said, " What eminence he had was by a felicity of manner: he had no more learning than what he could not help."

On Saturday, April 24, I dined with him at Mr Beauchlerk's, with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr Jones, (now Sir William,) Mr Langton, Mr Steevens, Mr Paradise, and Dr. Higgins. I mentioned that a Mr Wilkes¹ had attacked Garrick to me, as a man who had no friend. JOHNSON " I believe he is right, Sir. *Οι φίλοι ου φίλος*. He had friends, but no friend. Garrick was so diffused, he had no man to whom he wished to unbosom himself. He found people always ready to applaud him, and that always for the same thing: so he saw life with great uniformity." I took upon me, for once, to fight with Goliath's weapons, and play the sophist—" Garrick did not need a friend, as he got from every body all he wanted. What is a friend? One who supports you and comforts you, while others do not. Friendship, you know, Sir, is the cordial drop, 'to make the nauseous draught of life go down.' but if the draught be not nauseous, if it be all sweet, there is no occasion for that drop." JOHNSON " Many men would not be content to live so. I hope I should not. They would wish to have an intimate friend, with whom they might compare minds, and cherish private virtues." One of the company mentioned Lord Chesterfield, as a man who had no friend. JOHNSON. " There were more materials to make friendship in Garrick, had he not been so diffused." BOSWELL. " Garrick was pure gold, but beat out to thin leaf. Lord Chesterfield was tinsel." JOHNSON. " Garrick was a very good man, the cheerfulest man of his age, a decent liver in a profession which is supposed to give indulgence to licentiousness, and a man who gave away, freely, money acquired by himself. He began the world with a great hunger for money, the son of a half pay officer,

Second Edition.—Line 15 "a' omitted

¹ This awkward description, "a Mr Wilkes, was of course a ship Wilkes, however, could not have been offended with one of his most pleasant com-

bred in a family whose study was to make four-pence do as much as others made four-pence halfpenny do But, when he had got money, he was very liberal"—I presumed to animadvert on his eulogy on Garrick, in his "Lives of the Poets." "You say, Sir, his death eclipsed the gaiety of nations" JOHNSON. "I could not have said more nor less. It is the truth; *eclipsed*, not *extinguished*; and his death *did* eclipse, it was like a storm." BOSWELL "But why nations? Did his gaiety extend farther than his own nation?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, some exaggeration must be allowed Besides, nations may be said if we allow the Scotch to be a nation, and to have gaiety, which they have not. *You* are an exception though. Come, gentlemen, let us candidly admit that there is one Scotchman who is cheerful" BEAUCLERK "But he is a very unnatural Scotchman" I, however, continued to think the compliment to Garrick hyperbolically untrue His acting had ceased some time before his death, at any rate he had acted in Ireland but a short time, at an early period of his life, and never in Scotland I objected also to what appears an anticlimax of praise, when contrasted with the preceding panegyrick—"and diminished the publick stock of harmless pleasure!"—"Is not *harmless pleasure* very tame?" JOHNSON "Nay, Sir, harmless pleasure is the highest praise. Pleasure is a word of dubious import, pleasure is in general dangerous, and pernicious to virtue, to be able therefore to furnish pleasure that is harmless, pleasure pure and unalloyed, is as great a power as man can possess" This was, perhaps, as ingenious a defence as could be made, still, however, I was not satisfied.

A celebrated wit being mentioned,¹ he said, "One may say of him as was said of a French wit, *Il n'a de l'esprit que contre Dieu*. I have been several times in company with him, but never perceived any strong power of wit. He produces a general effect by various means, he has a cheerful countenance and a gay voice, besides his trade is wit It would be as wild in him to come

panions, who thus wrote to him shortly after the book appeared

"Portland street, Portland-place,

"Saturday, June 23

"MY DEAR SIR,—You said to me yesterday of my *magnum opus* 'it is a wonderful book' Do confirm this to me, so that I may have your *testimonium* in my archives at Auchinleck I trust we shall meet while you are in town

"Ever most truly yours,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

¹ It seems likely that Johnson is speaking of George Selwyn here The description — "his trade is wit," — the character of that wit, which was of a kind that Johnson would not have relished, either in form or subject—seem to point to him It might be supposed that Gibbon was intended But Boswell, who, within a few weeks, was writing of Gibbon to Temple, "he is an ugly disgusting fellow, and poisons our literary club to me," would hardly have dealt with him so gently

into company without merriment, as for a highwayman to take the road without his pistols."

Talking of the effects of drinking, he said, "Drinking may be practised with great prudence, a man who exposes himself when he is intoxicated, has not the art of getting drunk, a sober man who happens occasionally to get drunk, readily enough goes into a new company, which a man who has been drinking should never do. Such a man will undertake any thing; he is without skill in inebriation. I used to slink home when I had drunk too much. A man accustomed to self-examination will be conscious when he is drunk, though an habitual drunkard will not be conscious of it. I knew a physician who for twenty years was not sober, yet in a pamphlet, which he wrote upon fevers, he appealed to Garrick and me for his vindication from a charge of drunkenness. A bookseller (naming him) who got a large fortune by trade, was so habitually and equably drunk, that his most intimate friends never perceived that he was more sober at one time than another."

Talking of celebrated and successful irregular practisers in physick, he said, "Taylor¹ was the most ignorant man I ever knew; but sprightly Ward the dullest. Taylor challenged me once to talk Latin with him, (laughing). I quoted some of Horace, which he took to be a part of my own speech. He said a few words well enough." BEAUCLERK. "I remember, Sir, you said that Taylor was an instance how far impudence could carry ignorance." Mr. Beauclerk was very entertaining this day, and told us a number of short stories in a lively elegant manner, and with that air of *the world* which has I know not what impressive effect, as if there were something more than is expressed, or than perhaps we could perfectly understand.² As Johnson and I accompanied Sir Joshua Reynolds in his coach, Johnson said, "There is in Beauclerk a predominance over his company, that one does not like. But he is a man who has lived so much in the world, that he has a short story on every occasion; he is always ready to talk and is never exhausted."

Johnson and I passed the evening at Miss Reynolds's, Sir Joshua's sister. I mentioned that an eminent friend of our's talking of the common remark, that affection descends, said that "this was wisely contrived for the preservation of mankind; for which it was not so necessary that there should be affection from children to parents, as from parents to children, nay there would be no harm in that view though children should at a certain age eat their parents." JOHNSON. "But, Sir, if this were known generally to be the case, parent

¹ A fashionable oculist, and the father of the John Taylor, editor of the *Sun*.

² "Yes, Beauclerk was first upon the languid list of *son* people."—*Pross, Marg.*

would not have affection for children" BOSWELL "True, Sir, for it is in expectation of a return that parents are so attentive to their children; and I know a very pretty instance of a little girl of whom her father¹ was very fond, who once when he was in a melancholy fit, and had gone to bed, persuaded him to rise in good-humour, by saying, 'My dear papa, please to get up, and let me help you on with your clothes, that I may learn to do it when you are an old man.'"

Soon after this time a little incident occurred, which I will not suppress, because I am desirous that my work should be, as much as is consistent with the strictest truth, an antidote to the false and injurious notions of his character, which have been given by others, and therefore I infuse every drop of genuine sweetness into my biographical cup.

To Dr JOHNSON

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am in great pain with an inflamed foot,² and obliged to keep my bed, so am prevented from having the pleasure to dine at Mr Ramsay's to-day, which is very hard, and my spirits are sadly sunk Will you be so friendly as to come and sit an hour with me in the evening. I am ever

"Your most faithful,

"And affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL.

"South Audley-street,

"Monday, April 26 "

To Mr BOSWELL.

"MR. JOHNSON laments the absence of Mr. Boswell, and will come to him.

"Harley-street "

He came to me in the evening, and brought Sir Joshua Reynolds. I need scarcely say, that their conversation, while they sate by my bedside, was the most pleasing opiate to pain that could have been administered.

Johnson being now better disposed to obtain information concerning Pope than he was last year,³ sent by me to my Lord March-

³ See p 333 of this Volume

¹ Mr Croker suggests that this refers to Boswell himself

² "So trifling a matter as letting the nails of my great toes grow into the flesh, particularly in one foot, produced

so much pain and inflammation, and lameness, and apprehension, that I was confined to my bed, and my spirits sank to dreary dejection"—*Letters to Temple.*

mont, a present of those volumes of his "Lives of the Poets," which were at this time published, with a request to have permission to wait on him, and his Lordship, who had called on him twice, obligingly appointed Saturday, the first of May, for receiving us.

On that morning Johnson came to me from Streatham, and after drinking chocolate, at General Paoli's, in South-Audley-street, we proceeded to Lord Marchmont's, in Curzon-street. His Lordship met us at the door of his library, and with great politeness said to Johnson, "I am not going to make an encomium upon *myself*, by telling you the high respect I have for *you*, Sir." Johnson was exceedingly courteous, and the interview, which lasted about two hours, during which the Earl communicated his anecdotes of Pope, was as agreeable as I could have wished. When we came out, I said to Johnson, that considering his Lordship's civility, I should have been vexed if he had again failed to come. "Sir (said he) I would rather have given twenty pounds than not have come." I accompanied him to Streatham, where we dined, and returned to town in the evening.

On Monday, May 3, I dined with him at Mr Dilly's,¹ I pressed him this day for his opinion on the passage in Parnell, concerning which I had in vain questioned him in several letters, and at length obtained it in *due form of law*;

CASE for Dr JOHNSON's Opinion; 3d of May, 1779.

"PARNELL, in his 'Hermit,' has the following passage·

'To clear this doubt, to know the world by sight,
To find if *books* and *swains* report it right
(For yet by *swains alone* the world he knew,
Whose sect came wandering o'er the nightly dew).'

Is there not a contradiction in its being *first* supposed that the Hermit knew *both* what books and swains reported of the world, yet *afterwards* said, that he knew it by *swains alone*?

"I think it an inaccuracy — He mentions two instructors in the first line, and says he had only one in the next."

Cor et Ad — Last line. On "next" put the following note — "Mr Malone, it must be owned, has shewn much critical ingenuity in his explanation of this passage. His interpretation, however, seems to me much too reconcile. The *meaning* of the passage may be certain enough, but surely the expression is confused, and one part of it contradictory to the other."

¹ A good deal of the evening must have been devoted to the discussion of politics, as Boswell says he came away "confirmed in his Toryism" — *Letters to Temple*

² Mr Malone, however, thus defends his opinion — "But why too *reconcile*? — When a meaning is given to a passage by understanding words in an uncommon sense, the interpretation may be said to

This evening I set out for Scotland.¹

To Mrs. LUCY PORTER, in Lichfield.

"DEAR MADAM,—Mr Green has informed me that you are much better, I hope I need not tell you that I am glad of it. I cannot boast of being much better, my old nocturnal complaint still pursues me, and my respiration is difficult, though much easier than when I left you the summer before last. Mr and Mrs Thrale are well, Miss has been a little indisposed, but she is got well again. They have since the loss of their boy had two daughters, but they seem likely to want a son.

"I hope you had some books which I sent you. I was sorry for poor Mrs. Adey's death, and am afraid you will be sometimes solitary, but endeavour, whether alone or in company, to keep yourself cheerful. My friends likewise die very fast, but such is the state of man. I am, dear love,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON

"May 4, 1779"

He had, before I left London, resumed the conversation concerning the appearance of a ghost at Newcastle upon Tyne, which Mr John Wesley believed, but to which Johnson did not give credit. I was, however, desirous to examine the question closely, and at the same time wished to be made acquainted with Mr. John Wesley, for though I differed from him in some points, I admired his various talents, and loved his pious zeal. At my request, therefore, Dr Johnson gave me a letter of introduction to him.²

To the Reverend Mr. JOHN WESLEY

"SIR,—Mr. Boswell, a gentleman who has been long known to

be *recondite*, and, however ingenious, may be suspected not to be sound, but when words are explained in their ordinary acceptation, and the explication which is fairly deduced from them without any force or constraint is also perfectly justified by the context, it surely may be safely accepted, and the calling such an explication *recondite*, when nothing else can be said against it, will not make it the less just."

¹ The immediate cause of his journey was the "having received a very wise letter from my sensible, valuable wife, that, although my father is in no immediate danger, his indisposition is such

that I ought to be with him."

² On the road he stopped at Newcastle. "I got into the fly at Buckden, and had a very good journey. An agreeable young widow nursed me, and supported my lame leg on her knee. *Am I not fortunate in having something about me that interests people at first sight in my favour?* I am to rest here till Monday, when I hope to get home to my wife and children. I never wished so warmly to see them again as I do at present." He concludes his letter, no doubt under the influence of the visit to Wesley, "we should cultivate submission for the Lord's sake."

me, is desirous of being known to you, and has asked this recommendation, which I give him with great willingness, because I think it very much to be wished that worthy and religious men should be acquainted with each other I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"May 3, 1779"

Mr Wesley being in the course of his ministry at Edinburgh, I presented this letter to him, and was very politely received I begged to have it returned to me, which was accordingly done. His state of the evidence as to the ghost, did not satisfy me.

I did not write to Johnson, as usual, upon my return to my family, but tried how he would be affected by my silence. Mr. Dilly sent me a copy of a note which he received from him on the 13th of July, in these words

To Mr DILLY.

"SIR,—Since Mr. Boswell's departure I have never heard from him, please to send word what you know of him, and whether you have sent my books to his lady. I am, &c

"SAM. JOHNSON "

My readers will not doubt that his solicitude about me was very flattering.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—What can possibly have happened, that keeps us two such strangers to each other? I expected to have heard from you when you came home; I expected afterwards I went into the country, and returned, and yet there is no letter from Mr Boswell. No ill I hope has happened, and if ill should happen, why should it be concealed from him who loves you? Is it a fit of humour, that has disposed you to try who can hold out longest without writing? if it be, you have the victory. But I am afraid of something bad, set me free from my suspicions.

"My thoughts are at present employed in guessing the reason of your silence. you must not expect that I should tell you any thing, if I had any thing to tell. Write, pray write to me, and let me know what is, or what has been the cause of this long interruption. I am, dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"July 13, 1779"

To Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, July 17, 1779

"MY DEAR SIR,—What may be justly denominated a supine indolence of mind has been my state of existence since I last returned to Scotland. In a livelier state I had often suffered severely from long intervals of silence on your part; and I had even been chid by you for expressing my uneasiness. I was willing to take advantage of my insensibility, and while I could bear the experiment, to try whether your affection for me, would, after an unusual silence on my part, make you write first. This afternoon I have had very high satisfaction by receiving your kind letter of inquiry, for which I most gratefully thank you. I am doubtful if it was right to make the experiment, though I have gained by it. I was beginning to grow tender, and to upbraid myself, especially after having dreamt two nights ago that I was with you I and my wife, and my four children, are all well I would not delay one post to answer your letter, but as it is late, I have not time to do more. You shall soon hear from me, upon many and various particulars, and I shall never again put you to any test. I ever am, with veneration, my dear Sir,

"Your much obliged

"And faithful humble servant.

"JAMES BOSWELL."

On the 22d of July, I wrote to him again, and gave him an account of my last interview with my worthy friend, Mr Edward Dilly, at his brother's house at Southill, in Bedfordshire, where he died soon after I parted from him, leaving me a very kind remembrance of his regard¹

I informed him that Lord Hailes, who had promised to furnish him with some anecdotes for his "*Lives of the Poets*," had sent me three instances of Prior's borrowing from *Gombauld*, in "*Recueil des Poetes*," tome 3. Epigram "To John I owed, 'great obligation,'" p. 25. "To the Duke of Noailles," p. 32 "Sauntering Jack and idle Joan," p. 25

My letter was a pretty long one, and contained a variety of particulars; but he, it would seem had not attended to it, for his next to me was as follows.

¹ On his way to Newcastle he had stopped at Southill "I am quite the great man here," he wrote to Temple "Poor Mr Edward Dilly is fast a dying He cried with affection at seeing me

here, he is in as agreeable a frame of mind as any Christian can be, repeats the second paragraph of Dr Young's 'Second Night,' &c. *I am edified here*"
—Letter to Temple

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Are you playing the same trick again, and trying who can keep silence longest? Remember that all tricks are either knavish or childish, and that it is as foolish to make experiments upon the constancy of a friend, as upon the chastity of a wife.

"What can be the cause of this second fit of silence, I cannot conjecture, but after one trick, I will not be cheated by another, nor will I harass my thoughts with conjectures about the motives of a man who, probably, acts only by caprice. I therefore suppose you are well, and that Mrs Boswell is well too, and that the fine summer has restored Lord Auchinleck. I am much better than you left me, I think I am better than when I was in Scotland.

"I forgot whether I informed you that poor Thrale has been in great danger. Mrs Thrale likewise has miscarried, and been much indisposed. Every body else is well, Langton is in camp. I intend to put Lord Hailes's description of Dryden^a into another edition, and as I know his accuracy, wish he would consider the dates, which I could not always settle to my own mind.

"Mr Thrale goes to Brighthelmston, about Michaelmas, to be jolly and ride a hunting. I shall go to town, or perhaps to Oxford. Exercise and gaiety, or rather carelessness, will, I hope, dissipate all remains of his malady, and I likewise hope by the change of place, to find some opportunities of growing yet better myself. I am, dear Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"Streatham, Sept 9, 1779."

"SAM JOHNSON.

My readers will not be displeased at being told every slight circumstance of the manner in which Dr. Johnson contrived to amuse his solitary hours. He sometimes employed himself in chymistry, sometimes in watering and pruning a vine, and sometimes in small experiments, at which those who may smile, should recollect that there are moments which admit of being soothed only by trifles.^b

^a Which I communicated to him from his Lordship, but it has not yet been published. I have a copy of it.

^b In one of his manuscript Diaries, there is the following entry, which marks his curious minute attention. "Aug 7, 1779. *Partem brachii dextri corporis proximam et cutem p. foris circa maxillam dextram rasi, ut notum fuerit quanto tempore pilis renascantur*."

Another of the same kind appears, "July 26, 1768. I shaved my nail by accident in whetting the knife, about an eighth of an inch from the bottom, and about a fourth from the top. Thus I measure that I may know the growth of nails, the whole is all out five eighths of an inch."

And, "Aug 15, 1793. I cut from the vine 41 leaves, which weighed five oz and a half and eight scruples.—I lay them upon my book-case to see what weight they will lose by drying."

Cor. et ci. — Line 5 of notes. For "maxillam" read "mamillam."

On the 20th of September I defended myself against his suspicion of me, which I did not deserve; and I added, "Pray let us write frequently. A whim strikes me, that we should each send off a sheet once a week, like a stage-coach, whether it be full or not, nay, though it should be empty. The very sight of your handwriting would comfort me, and were a sheet to be thus sent regularly, we should much oftener convey something, were it only a few kind words."

My friend Colonel James Stuart, second son of the Earl of Bute, who had distinguished himself as a good officer of the Bedfordshire militia, had taken a publick-spirited resolution to serve his country in its difficulties, by raising a regular regiment, and taking the command of it himself. This, in the heir of the immense property of Wortley, was highly honourable. Having been in Scotland recruiting, he obligingly asked me to accompany him to Leeds, then the head-quarters of his corps; from thence to London for a short time, and afterwards to other places to which the regiment might be ordered. Such an offer, at a time of the year when I had full leisure, was very pleasing, especially as I was to accompany a man of sterling good sense, information, discernment, and conviviality, and was to have a second crop, in one year, of London and Johnson. Of this I informed my illustrious friend, in characteristic warm terms, in a letter dated the 30th of September, from Leeds.

On Monday, October 4, I called at his house before he was up. He sent for me to his bedside, and expressed his satisfaction at this incidental meeting, with as much vivacity as if he had been in the gaiety of youth. He called briskly, "Frank, go and get coffee, and let us breakfast in splendour."

During this visit to London I had several interviews with him, which it is unnecessary to distinguish particularly. I consulted him as to the appointment of guardians to my children, in case of my death. "Sir, (said he,) do not appoint a number of guardians. When they are many, they trust one to another, and the business is neglected. I would advise you to choose only one, let him be a man of respectable character, who, for his own credit, will do what is right; let him be a rich man, so that he may be under no temptation to take advantage, and let him be a man of business, who is used to conduct affairs with ability and expertness, to whom, therefore, the execution of the trust will not be burthensome."

On Sunday, October 10, we dined together at Mr Strahan's. The conversation having turned on the prevailing practice of going to the East-Indies in quest of wealth;—JOHNSON. "A man had

better have ten thousand pounds at the end of ten years passed in England, than twenty thousand pounds at the end of ten years passed in India, because you must compute what you *give* for money, and a man who has lived ten years in India, has given up ten years of social comfort and all those advantages which arise from living in England. The ingenious Mr. Brown, distinguished by the name of *Capability Brown*, told me, that he was once at the seat of Lord Clive, who had returned from India with great wealth, and that he shewed him at the door of his bed-chamber a large chest, which he said he had once had full of gold, upon which Brown observed, 'I am glad you can bear it so near your bed-chamber.' "

We talked of the state of the poor in London.—JOHNSON "Saunders Welch, the Justice, who was once High-Constable of Holborn, and had the best opportunities of knowing the state of the poor, told me, that I under-rated the number, when I computed that twenty a week, that is, above a thousand a year, died of hunger; not absolutely of immediate hunger, but of the wasting and other diseases which are the consequences of hunger. This happens only in so large a place as London, where people are not known. What we are told about the great sums got by begging is not true the trade is overstocked. And, you may depend upon it, there are many who cannot get work. A particular kind of manufacture fails. Those who have been used to work at it can, for some time, work at nothing else. You meet a man begging, you charge him with idleness: he says, 'I am willing to labour. Will you give me work?'—'I cannot'—'Why then you have no right to charge me with idleness' "

We left Mr Strahan's at seven, as Johnson had said he intended to go to evening prayers. As we walked along, he complained of a little gout in his toe, and said, "I shan't go to prayers to-night, I shall go to-morrow. Whenever I miss church on a Sunday, I resolve to go another day. But I do not always do it." This was a fair exhibition of that vibration between pious resolutions and indolence, which many of us have too often experienced.

I went home with him, and we had a long quiet conversation.

I read him a letter from Dr Hugh Blair, concerning Pope, (in writing whose life he was now employed,) which I shall insert as a literary curiosity.*

* The Reverend Dr Law, Bishop of Carlisle, in the Preface to his valuable edition of Archbishop King's "Essay on the Origin of Evil," mentions that the principles maintained in it had been adopted by Pope in his "Essay on Man," and adds, 'The fact, notwithstanding such denial, (Bishop Warburton's,) might have been

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—In the year 1763, being at London, I was carried by Dr. John Blair, Prebendary of Westminster, to dine at old Lord Bathurst's;¹ where we found the late Mr. Mallet, Sir James Porter, who had been Ambassadour at Constantinople, the late Dr. Ma-caulay, and two or three more. The conversation turning on Mr. Pope, Lord Bathurst told us, that 'The Essay on Man' was originally composed by Lord Bolingbroke in prose, and that Mr. Pope did no more than put it into verse: that he had read Lord Bolingbroke's manuscript in his own hand-writing; and remembered well, that he was at a loss whether most to admire the elegance of Lord Bolingbroke's prose, or the beauty of Mr. Pope's verse. When Lord Bathurst told this, Mr. Mallet bade me attend, and remember this remarkable piece of information, as, by the course of Nature, I might survive his Lordship, and be a witness of his having said so. The conversation was indeed too remarkable to be forgotten. A few days after, meeting with you, who were then also at London, you will remember that I mentioned to you what had passed on this subject, as I was much struck with this anecdote. But what ascertains my recollection of it beyond doubt, is, that being accustomed to keep a journal of what passed when I was at London, which I wrote out every evening, I find the particulars of the above information, just as I have now given them, distinctly marked, and am thence enabled to fix this conversation to have passed on Friday, the 22d of April, 1763.

"I remember also distinctly, (though I have not for this the authority of my journal,) that the conversation going on concerning Mr. Pope, I took notice of a report which had been sometimes

strictly verified by an unexceptionable testimony, *viz* that of the late Lord Bathurst, who saw the very same system of the *re Belvior* (taken from the Archbishop) in Lord Bolingbroke's own hand, lying before Mr. Pope while he was composing his Essay." This is respectable evidence, but that of Dr. Blair is more direct from the fountain-head, as well as more full.

Second Edition —Add to note, "Let me add to it that of Dr. Joseph Warton; 'The late Lord Bathurst repeatedly assured me that he had read the whole scheme of "the Essay on Man," in the hand-writing of Bolingbroke, and drawn up in a series of propositions, which Pope was to versify and illustrate.' Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope, vol. ii p. 62."

¹ When Mr. Sterne was at the Prince of Wales's levee in 1767, this ancient nobleman, then eighty-five years old, came up to him. "I want to know you, Mr. Sterne," he said. "You have heard of that old Lord Bathurst, of whom your Popes and Swifts have sung and

spoken so much. I have lived my life with geniuses of that cast, but have survived them; and despairing ever to find their equals—'tis some years I closed my accounts and shut up my books."—*York's Letters to Eliza*

propagated that he did not understand Greek. Lord Bathurst said to me, that he knew that to be false, for that part of the *Iliad* was translated by Mr. Pope in his house in the country, and that in the mornings, when they assembled at breakfast, Mr. Pope used frequently to repeat, with great rapture, the Greek lines which he had been translating, and then to give them his version of them, and to compare them together

"If these circumstances can be of any use to Dr Johnson, you have my full liberty to give them to him. I beg you will, at the same time, present to him my most respectful compliments, with best wishes for his success and fame in all his literary undertakings. I am, with great respect, my dearest Sir,

"Your most affectionate

"And obliged humble servant,

"HUGH BLAIR.

"Broughton Park,
"Sept 21, 1779."

JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, this is too strongly stated. Pope may have had from Bolingbroke the philosophick stamina of his *Essay* and admitting this to be true, Lord Bathurst did not intentionally falsify. But the thing is not true in the latitude that Blair seems to imagine, we are sure that the poetical imagery, which makes a great part of the poem, was Pope's own. It is amazing, Sir, what deviations there are from precise truth, in the account which is given of almost every thing. I told Mrs Thrale, 'You have so little anxiety about truth, that you never tax your memory with the exact thing.' Now what is the use of the memory to truth, if one is careless of exactness? Lord Hailes's '*Annals of Scotland*' are very exact. but they contain mere dry particulars. They are to be considered as a Dictionary. You know such things are there, and may be looked at when you please. Robertson paints, but the misfortune is, you are sure he does not know the people whom he paints: so you cannot suppose a likeness. Characters should never be given by an historian unless he knew the people whom he describes, or copies from those who knew them."

BOSWELL. "Why, Sir, do people play this trick which I observe now, when I look at your grate, putting the shovel against it to make the fire burn?" JOHNSON. "They play the trick, but it does not make the fire burn. *There* is a better (setting the poker perpendicularly up at right angles with the grate). In days of superstition they thought, as it made a cross with the bars, it would drive away the witch."

BOSWELL. "By associating with you, Sir, I am always getting an

accession of wisdom. But perhaps a man, after knowing his own character—the limited strength of his own mind, should not be desirous of having too much wisdom, considering, *quid valeant humeri*, how little he can carry." JOHNSON. "Sir, be as wise as you can, let a man be *alius latus, sapiens sibi* -

' Though pleas'd to see the dolphins play,
I mind my compass and my way.'

You may be wise in your study in the morning, and gay in company at a tavern in the evening Every man is to take care of his own wisdom and his own virtue, without minding too much what others think."

He said, "Dodsley first mentioned to me the scheme of an English Dictionary; but I had long thought of it" BOSWELL. "You did not know what you was undertaking" JOHNSON "Yes, Sir, I knew very well what I was undertaking—and very well how to do it—and have done it very well" BOSWELL "An excellent climax" and it *has* availed you In your Preface you say, 'What would it avail me in this gloom of solitude?' You have been agreeably mistaken."

In his Life of Milton he observes, "I cannot but remark a kind of respect, perhaps unconsciously, paid to this great man by his biographers. every house in which he resided is historically mentioned, as if it were an injury to neglect naming any place that he honoured by his presence." I had, before I read this observation, been desirous of shewing that respect to Johnson, by various inquiries Finding him this evening in a very good humour, I prevailed on him to give me an exact list of his places of residence, since he entered the metropolis as an authour, which I subjoin in a note.^a

^a 1 Exeter-street, off Catherine-street, Strand.

2 Greenwich

3 Woodstock-street, near Hanover-square.

4 Castle-street, Cavendish-square

5 Strand

6 Boswell-court.

7 Strand, again.

8 Bow-street

9 Holborn

10 Fetter-lane

11 Holborn, again.

12 Gough-square.

13 Staple Inn

14 Gray's Inn

15 Inner Temple-lane, No. 1.

16 Johnson's-court, No 7

17 Bolt-court, No 8

I mentioned to him a dispute between a friend of mine and his lady,¹ concerning conjugal infidelity, which my friend had maintained was by no means so bad in the husband, as in the wife. JOHNSON "Your friend was in the right, Sir. Between a man and his Maker it is a different question, but between a man and his wife, a husband's infidelity is nothing. They are connected by children, by fortune, by serious considerations of community. Wise married women don't trouble themselves about infidelity in their husbands." BOSWELL "To be sure there is a great difference between the offence of infidelity in a man and that of his wife." JOHNSON "The difference is boundless. The man imposes no bastards upon his wife."²

Here it may be questioned whether Johnson was entirely in the right. I suppose it will not be controverted that the difference in the degree of criminality is very great, on account of consequences. but still it may be maintained, that, independent of moral obligation, infidelity is by no means a light offence in a husband, because it must hurt a delicate attachment, in which a mutual constancy is implied, with such refined sentiments as Massinger has exhibited in his play of "The Picture." Johnson probably at another time would have admitted this opinion. And let it be kept in remembrance, that he was very careful not to give any encouragement to irregular conduct. A gentleman, not adverting to the distinction made by him upon this subject, supposed a case of singular perverseness in a wife, and heedlessly said, "That then he thought a husband might do as he pleased with a safe conscience." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, this is wild indeed (smiling), you must consider that fornication is a crime in a single man, and you cannot have more liberty by being married."

He this evening expressed himself strongly against the Roman Catholics, observing, "In every thing in which they differ from us they are wrong." He was even against the invocation of Saints, in short, he was in the humour of opposition.

Having regretted to him that I had learnt little Greek, as is too generally the case in Scotland, that I had for a long time hardly applied at all to the study of that noble language, and that I was desirous of being told by him what method to follow, he recommended to me as easy helps, Sylvanus's "First Book of the Iliad," Dawson's "Lexicon to the Greek New Testament;" and "Hesiod," with *Pasoris Lexicon* at the end of it.

¹ No doubt the Colonel and Mrs Stuart before alluded to.

² Mrs Piozzi writes opposite this pas-

sage, "Sometimes he does. Johnson knew a man who did, and the lady took very tender care of them"—*Marginalia*.

On Tuesday, October 12, I dined with him at Mr. Ramsay's, with Lord Newhaven, and some other company, none of whom I recollect, but a beautiful Miss Graham, a relation of his Lordship's, who asked Dr. Johnson to hob or nob with her. He was flattered by such pleasing attention, and politely told her, he never drank wine, but if she would drink a glass of water, he was much at her service. She accepted "Oho, Sir!" (said Lord Newhaven) you are caught." JOHNSON. "Nay, I do not see *how* I am caught, but if I am caught I don't want to get free again. If I am caught, I hope to be kept." Then when the two glasses of water were brought, smiling placidly to the young lady, "Madam, let us *reciprocate*."

Lord Newhaven and Johnson carried on an argument for some time, concerning the Middlesex election. Johnson said, "Parliament may be considered as bound by law, as a man is bound where there is nobody to tie the knot. As it is clear that the House of Commons may expel, and expel again and again, why not allow of the power to incapacitate for that parliament, rather than have a perpetual contest kept up between parliament and the people." Lord Newhaven took the opposite side, but respectfully said, "I speak with great deference to you, Dr. Johnson; I speak to be instructed." This had its full effect upon my friend. He bowed his head almost as low as the table, to a complimenting nobleman, and called out, "My Lord, my Lord, I do not desire all this ceremony; let us tell our minds to one another quietly." After the debate was over, he said, "I have got lights on the subject to-day, which I had not before." This was a great deal from him, especially as he had written a pamphlet upon it.

He observed, "The House of Commons was originally not a privilege of the people, but a check for the Crown on the House of Lords. I remember Henry the Eighth, wanted them to do something, they hesitated in the morning, but did it in the afternoon. He told them, 'It is well you did, or half your heads should have been upon Temple-bar.' But the House of Commons is now no longer under the power of the crown, and therefore must be bribed." He added, "I have no delight in talking of publick affairs."

Of his fellow-collegian, the celebrated Mr George Whitefield, he said, "Whitefield never drew as much attention as a mountebank does, he did not draw attention by doing better than others, but by doing what was strange. Were Astley to preach a sermon standing upon his head on a horse's back, he would collect a multitude to hear

Cor et Ad.—Line 3. On "Graham" put the following note.—"Now the lady of Sir Henry Dashwood, Baronet."

him ; but no wise man would say he had made a better sermon for that. I never treated Whitefield's ministry with contempt ; I believe he did good. He had devoted himself to the lower classes of mankind, and among them he was of use. But when familiarity and noise claim the praise due to knowledge, art, and elegance, we must beat down such pretensions."

What I have preserved of his conversation during the remainder of my stay in London at this time, is only what follows I told him that when I objected to keeping company with a notorious infidel, a celebrated friend of ours¹ said to me, "I do not think that men who live laxly in the world, as you and I do, can with propriety assume such an authority Dr. Johnson may, who is uniformly exemplary in his conduct. But it is not very consistent to shun an infidel to day, and get drunk to-morrow." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, this is sad reasoning. Because a man cannot be right in all things, is he to be right in nothing? Because a man sometimes gets drunk, is he therefore to steal? This doctrine would very soon bring a man to the gallows

"After all, however, it is a difficult question how far sincere Christians should associate with the avowed enemies of religion ; for in the first place, almost every man's mind may be more or less 'corrupted by evil communications, secondly, the world may very naturally suppose that they are not really in earnest in religion, who can easily bear its opponents, and thirdly, if the profane find themselves quite well received by the pious, one of the checks upon an open declaration of their infidelity, and one of the probable chances of obliging them seriously to reflect, which their being shunned would do, is removed "

He, I know not why, shewed upon all occasions an aversion to go to Ireland, where I proposed to him that we should make a tour. JOHNSON. "It is the last place where I should wish to travel" BOSWELL. "Should you not like to see Dublin, Sir?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir, Dublin is only a worse capital" BOSWELL. "Is not the Giant's Causeway worth seeing?" JOHNSON. "Worth seeing, yes; but not worth going to see."

Cor et Ad—After line 34, read, "Yet he had a kindness for the Irish nation, and thus generously expressed himself to a gentleman from that country, on the subject of an UNION which artful Politicians have often had in view—" Do not make an union with us, Sir We should unite with you, only to rob you We should have robbed the Scotch, if they had had anything of which we could have robbed them "

¹ Mr Croker thinks that Burke was intended here This seems doubtful it was surely Windham who might be said to "live laxly in the world "

Of an acquaintance of ours, whose manners and every thing about him, though expensive, were coarse, he said, "Sir, you see in him vulgar prosperity."

A foreign minister¹ of no very high talents, who had been in his company for a considerable time quite overlooked, happened luckily to mention that he had read some of his "*Rambler*" in Italian, and admired it much. This pleased him greatly, he observed, that the title had been translated, *Il Genio errante*, though I have been told it was rendered more ludicrously, *Il Vagabondo*, and finding that this minister gave such a proof of his taste, he was all attention to him, and on the first remark which he made, however simple, exclaimed, "The Ambassadour says well—His Excellency observes—" And then he expanded and enriched the little that had been said in so strong a manner, that it appeared something of consequence. This was exceedingly entertaining to the company who were present, and many a time afterwards it furnished a pleasant topick of merriment. "*The Ambassadour says well*," became a laughable term of applause, when no mighty matter had been expressed.

I left London on Monday, October 18, and accompanied Colonel Stuart to Chester, where his regiment was to lye for some time

Mr Boswell to Dr JOHNSON

"Chester, 22 October, 1779

"MY DEAR SIR,—It was not till one o'clock on Monday morning, that Colonel Stuart and I left London, for we chose to bid a cordial adieu to Lord Mountstuart, who was to set out on that day on his embassy to Turin. We drove on excellently, and reached Lichfield in good time enough that night. The Colonel had heard so preferable a character of the George, that he would not put up at the Three Crowns, so that I did not see our host Wilkins. We found at the George as good accommodation as we could wish to have, and I fully enjoyed the comfortable thought that *I was in Lichfield again*. Next morning it rained very hard, and as I had much to do in a little time, I ordered a post chaise, and between eight and nine sallied forth to make a round of visits. I first went to Mr. Green, hoping to have had him to accompany me to all my other friends, but he was engaged to attend the Bishop of Sodor and Man, who was then lying at Lichfield very ill of the gout. Having

¹ Prince Castiglione. Mrs. Piozzi adds (*Marginalia*), "The man who drank his health by the name of Mr Vagabond." The lively *Chronique* had no doubt confused the elements of the story.

taken a hasty glance at the additions to Green's museum, from which it was not easy to break away, I next went to the Friery, where I at first occasioned some tumult in the ladies, who were not prepared to receive *company* so early, but my *name*, which has by wonderful felicity come to be so closely associated with yours, soon made all easy, and Mrs Cobb and Miss Adye re-assumed their seats at the breakfast-table, which they had quitted with some precipitation. They received me with the kindness of old acquaintance, and after we had joined in a cordial chorus to *your* praise, Mrs. Cobb gave *me* the high satisfaction of hearing that you said, 'Boswell is a man who I believe never left a house without leaving a wish for his return.' And she afterwards added, that she bid you tell me, that if ever I came to Lichfield, she hoped I would take a bed at the Friery. From thence I drove to Peter Garrick's, where I also found a very flattering welcome. He appeared to me to enjoy his usual cheerfulness, and he very kindly asked me to come when I could, and pass a week with him. From Mr Garrick's I went to the Palace to wait on Mr Seward. I was first entertained by his lady and daughter, he himself being in bed with a cold, according to his valetudinary custom. But he desired to see me; and I found him drest in his black gown, with a white flannel night-gown above it, so that he looked like a Dominican friar. He was good humoured and polite, and under his roof too my reception was very pleasing. I then proceeded to Stowhill, and first paid my respects to Mrs Gastrell, whose conversation I was not willing to quit. But my sand-glass was now beginning to run low, as I could not trespass too long on the Colonel's kindness, who obligingly waited for me, so I hastened to Mrs Aston's, whom I found much better than I feared I should, and there I met a brother-in-law of these ladies, who talked much of you, and very well too, as it appeared to me. It then only remained to visit Mrs Lucy Porter, which I did, I really believe, with sincere satisfaction on both sides. I am sure I was glad to see her again, and, as I take her to be very honest, I trust she was glad to see me again, for she expressed herself so, that I could not doubt of her being in earnest. What a great key-stone of kindness, my dear Sir, was you that morning! for we were all held together by our common attachment to you. I cannot say that I ever passed two hours with more self-complacency than I did those two at Lichfield. Let me not entertain any suspicion that this is idle vanity. Will not you confirm me in my persuasion, that he who finds himself so regarded has just reason to be happy?

"We got to Chester about midnight on Tuesday; and here again

I am in a state of much enjoyment Colonel Stuart and his officers treat me with all the civility I could wish, and I play my part admirably *Latus alius, sapiens sibi*, the classical sentence which you, I imagine, invented the other day, is exemplified in my present existence. The Bishop, to whom I had the honour to be known several years ago, shews me much attention, and I am edified by his conversation. I must not omit to tell you, that his Lordship admires, very highly, your Prefaces to the Poets I am daily obtaining an extension of agreeable acquaintance, so that I am kept in animated variety, and the study of the place itself, by the assistance of books, and of the Bishop, is sufficient occupation. Chester pleases my fancy more than any town I ever saw. But I will not enter upon it at all in this letter

"How long I shall stay here, I cannot yet say. I told a very pleasing young lady,¹ niece to one of the Prebendaries, at whose house I saw her, 'I have come to Chester, Madam, I cannot tell how, and far less can I tell how I am to get away from it.' Do not think me too juvenile I beg it of you, my dear Sir, to favour me with a letter while I am here, and add to the happiness of a happy friend, who is ever, with affectionate veneration,

"Most sincerely yours,

"JAMES BOSWELL.

"If you do not write directly, so as to catch me here, I shall be disappointed Two lines from you will keep my lamp burning bright."

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—Why should you importune me so earnestly to write? Of what importance can it be to hear of distant friends, to a man who finds himself welcome wherever he goes, and makes new friends faster than he can want them? If, to the delight of such universal kindness of reception, any thing can be added by knowing that you retain my good-will, you may indulge yourself in the full enjoyment of that small addition

"I am glad that you made the round of Lichfield with so much

Cor et Ad—Line 15 On "lady" put the following note—"Miss Letitia Barnston"

¹ "We cannot but observe," writes Mr Boswell of himself, "that there are in it (one of his works) traits which time has not yet altered As for instance—

"Boswell does women adore,
And never once means to deceive;
He's in love with at least half a score—
If they're serious he smiles in his
sleeve"—*Memoir, Europ Mag.*

success: the oftener you are seen, the more you will be liked. It was pleasing to me to read that Mrs. Aston was so well; and that Lucy Porter was so glad to see you

"In the place where you now are, there is much to be observed, and you will easily procure yourself skilful directors. But what will you do to keep away the *black dog* that worries you at home? If you would, in compliance with your father's advice, enquire into the old tenures, and old charters of Scotland, you would certainly open to yourself many striking scenes of the manners of the middle ages. The feudal system, in a country half barbarous, is naturally productive of great anomalies in civil life. The knowledge of past times is naturally growing less in all cases not of public record, and the past time of Scotland is so unlike the present, that it is already difficult for a Scotchman to imagine the œconomy of his grandfather. Do not be tardy, nor negligent; but gather up eagerly what can yet be found."

"We have, I think, once talked of another project, a History of the late insurrection in Scotland, with all its incidents. Many falsehoods are passing into uncontradicted history. Voltaire, who loved a striking story, has told what we could not find to be true.

"You may make collections for either of these projects, or for both, as opportunities occur, and digest your materials at leisure. The great direction which Burton has left to men disordered like you, *Be not solitary, be not idle*. which I would thus modify,—If you are idle, be not solitary, if you are solitary, be not idle.

"There is a letter for you, from

"Your humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"London, Oct 27, 1779"

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Carlisle, Nov 7, 1779

"MY DEAR SIR,—That I should importune you to write to me at Chester, is not wonderful, when you consider what an avidity I have for delight, and that the *amor* of pleasure, like the *amor nummi*, increases in proportion with the quantity which we possess of it. Your letter, so full of polite kindness and masterly counsel, came like a large treasure upon me, while already glittering with riches.

* I have a valuable collection made by my Father which, with some additions and illustrations of my own I intend to publish. I have some hereditary claim to be an Antiquary, not only from my Father, but as being descended, by the mother's side, of the able and learned Sir John Skene, whose merit bids defiance to all the attempts which have been made to lessen his fame

(*Cr et Ad*—Line 24. After "you" read "is this"

I was quite enchanted at Chester, so that I could with difficulty quit it. But the enchantment was the reverse of that of Circe, for so far was there from being any thing sensual in it, that I was *all mind*. I do not mean all reason only, for my fancy was kept finely in play. And why not?—If you please I will send you a copy, or an abridgement of my Chester Journal, which is truly a log-book of felicity¹

"The Bishop treated me with a kindness which was very flattering. I told him, that you regretted you had seen so little of Chester. His Lordship bid me tell you, that he should be glad to shew you more of it. I am proud to find the friendship with which you honour me is known in so many places.

"I arrived here late last night. Our friend the Dean, has been gone from hence some months, but I am told at my inn, that he is very *populous* (popular). However, I found Mr Law, the Arch-deacon, son to the Bishop, and with him I have breakfasted and dined very agreeably. I got acquainted with him at the assizes here, about a year and a half ago, he is a man of great variety of knowledge, uncommon genius, and I believe, sincere religion. I received the holy sacrament in the cathedral in the morning, this being the first Sunday of the month, and was at prayers there in the evening. It is divinely cheering to me to think that there is a Cathedral so near Auchinleck, and I now leave Old England in such a state of mind as I am thankful to God for granting me.

"The *black dog* that worries me at home I cannot but dread, yet as I have been for some time past in a military train, I trust I shall *repulse* him. To hear from you will animate me like the sound of a trumpet, I therefore hope that soon after my return to the Northern field, I shall receive a few lines from you.

"Colonel Stuart did me the honour to escort me in his carriage to shew me Liverpool, and from thence back again to Warrington, where we parted*. In justice to my valuable wife, I must inform you, that as I was so happy, she would not be so selfish as to wish

* His regiment was afterwards ordered to Jamaica, where he accompanied it, and almost lost his life by the climate. This impartial order I should think a sufficient refutation of the idle rumour that "there was something behind the throne greater than the throne itself."

¹ "Where I passed another fortnight in mortal felicity. I had, from my earliest years, a love for the military life. At the mess of Colonel Stuart's regiment I was quite the *great man*, as we used to say, and I was at the same time all joyous and gay. The palace was open to me morning, noon, and

night, and I was liberally entertained at his hospitable board. (The town) has a theatre royal, and a very elegant assembly-room. I never found myself so well received any where. The young ladies there were delightful, and many of them with capital fortunes."—*Letter to Temple*

me to return sooner than business absolutely required my presence. She made my clerk write to me a post or two after to the same purpose, by commission from her, and this day a kind letter from her met me at the Post Office here, acquainting me that she and the little ones were well, and expressing all their wishes for my return home. I am, more and more, my dear Sir,

"Your affectionate,

"And obliged humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL "

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—Your last letter was not only kind but fond. But I wish you to get rid of all intellectual excesses, and neither to exalt your pleasures, nor aggravate your vexations, beyond their real and natural state. Why should you not be as happy at Edinburgh as at Chester, *In culpa est animus, qui se non effugit usquam*. Please yourself with your wife and children, and studies and practice

"I have sent a petition^a from Lucy Porter, with which I leave it to your discretion whether it is proper to comply. Return me her letter, which I have sent that you may know the whole case, and not be seduced to any thing that you may afterwards repent. Miss Doxy perhaps you know to be Mr Garrick's niece.

"If Dean Percy can be popular at Carlisle, he may be very happy. He has in his disposal two livings, each equal, or almost equal in value to the deanery, he may take one himself, and give the other to his son

"How near is the Cathedral to Auchinleck, that you are so much delighted with it? It is, I suppose, at least an hundred and fifty miles off. However, if you are pleased, it is so far well.

"Let me know what reception you have from your father, and the state of his health¹. Please him as much as you can, and add no pain to his last years.

"Of our friends here I can recollect nothing to tell you. I have neither seen nor heard of Langton. Beauclerk is just returned from Brighthelmston, I am told, much better. Mr Thrale and his

^a Requesting me to inquire concerning the family of a gentleman who was then paying his addresses to Miss Doxy

¹ "My father was thus winterseized with a fever his pulse was at ninety-five, and he was in danger, but he has recovered wonderfully. But he is sadly influenced

by his second wife, and I cannot interfere, however galling it is to me to see him estranged from me and my family."
—Letter to Temple.

family are still here; and his health is said to be visibly improved, he has not bathed, but hunted.

"At Bolt-court there is much malignity,¹ but of late little open hostility. I have had a cold, but it is gone.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, &c. I am, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"London, November 13, 1773"

On November 22, and December 21, I wrote to him from Edinburgh, giving a very favourable report of the family of Miss Doxy's lover,²—that after a good deal of inquiry I had discovered the sister of Mr Francis Stewart, one of his amanuenses when writing his Dictionary,—that I had, as desired by him, paid her a guinea for an old pocket-book of her brother's which he had retained, and that the good woman, who was in very moderate circumstances, but contented and placid, wondered at his scrupulous and liberal honesty, and received the guinea as if sent her by Providence.—That I had repeatedly begged of him to keep his promise to send me his letter to Lord Chesterfield, and that this *memento*, like *Delinda est Carthago*, must be in every letter that I should write to him, till I had obtained my object

In 1780 the world was kept in impatience for the completion of his "*Lives of the Poets*," upon which he was employed so far as his indolence allowed him to labour.

I wrote to him on January 1, and March 13, sending him my notes of Lord Marchmont's information concerning Pope,—complaining that I had not heard from him for almost four months, though he was two letters in my debt,—that I had suffered again from melancholy,—hoping that he had been in so much better company, (the Poets,) that he had not time to think of his distant friends, for if that were the case, I should have some recompence for my uneasiness,—that the state of my affairs did not admit of my coming to London this year,—and, begging he would return me Goldsmith's two poems, with his lines marked

His friend Dr. Lawrence having now suffered the greatest affliction to which a man is liable, and which Johnson himself had felt in the most severe manner; Johnson wrote to him in an admirable strain of sympathy and pious consolation.

¹ Referring to the lady penmoners who lived in his house

² Miss Mernall Doxy was later mar-

ried to Mr Patton, a Scotch gentleman. See the pedigree of the family in the Editor's *Life of Garrick*

To Dr LAWRENCE.

"DEAR SIR,—At a time when all your friends ought to shew their kindness, and with a character which ought to make all that know you your friends, you may wonder that you have yet heard nothing from me.

"I have been hindered by a vexatious and incessant cough, for which within these ten days I have been bled once, fasted four or five times, taken physick five times, and opiates, I think, six. This day seems to remit.

"The loss, dear Sir, which you have lately suffered, I felt many years ago and know therefore how much has been taken from you, and how little help can be had from consolation. He that outlives a wife whom he has long loved, sees himself disjoined from the only mind that has the same hopes, and fears, and interest, from the only companion with whom he has shared much good or evil, and with whom he could set his mind at liberty, to retrace the past, or anticipate the future. The continuity of being is lacerated, the settled course of sentiment and action is stopped, and life stands suspended and motionless till it is driven by external causes into a new channel. But the time of suspense is dreadful.

"Our first recourse in this distressful solitude, is, perhaps, for want of habitual piety, to a gloomy acquiescence in necessity. Of two mortal beings, one must lose the other, but surely there is a higher and a better comfort to be drawn from the consideration of that Providence which watches over all, and a belief that the living and the dead are equally in the hands of God, who will reunite those whom he has separated, or who sees that it is best not to reunite them. I am, dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate,

"And most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"Jan 20 1780"

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—Well, I had resolved to send you the Chesterfield letter, but I will write once again without it. Never impose tasks upon mortals. To require two things is the way to have them both undone.

"For the difficulties which you mention in your affairs I am sorry,¹ but difficulty is now very general. it is not therefore less

¹ Mr Boswell, unknown to his father, at heavy interest — *Letter to Temple*.
had raised boot for his wife's nephews,

grievous, for there is less hope of help I pretend not to give you advice, not knowing the state of your affairs; and general counsels about prudence and frugality would do you little good You are, however, in the right not to increase your own perplexity by a journey hither, and I hope that by staying at home you will please your father.

"Poor dear Beauclerk—*nec, ut soles, dabis joca*.¹ His wit and his folly, his acuteness and maliciousness, his merriment and his reasoning, are now over Such another will not often be found among mankind He directed himself to be buried by the side of his mother, an instance of tenderness which I hardly expected He has left his children to the care of Lady D^r and if she dies, of Mr. Langton, and of Mr. Leicester, his relation, and a man of good character. His library has been offered to sale to the Russian ambassador.

"Dr. Percy, notwithstanding all the noise of the newspapers, has had no literary loss* Clothes and moveables were burnt to the value of about one hundred pounds, but his papers, and I think his books, were all preserved.

"Poor Mr. Thrale has been in extreme danger from an apoplectic disorder, and recovered, beyond the expectation of his physicians, he is now at Bath, that his mind may be quiet, and Mrs. Thrale and Miss are with him

"Having told you what has happened to your friends, let me say something to you of yourself You are always complaining of melancholy, and I conclude from those complaints that you are fond of it. No man talks of that which he is desirous to conceal, and every man desires to conceal that of which he is ashamed Do not pretend to deny it, *manifestum habemus furem*, make it an invariable and obligatory law to yourself, never to mention your own mental diseases, If you are never to speak of them you will think on them but little, and if you think little of them, they will molest you rarely. When you talk of them, it is plain that you want either praise or pity, for praise there is no room, and pity will do you no good, therefore, from this hour speak no more, think no more about them

"Your transaction with Mrs. Stuart gave me great satisfaction; I am much obliged to you for your attention. Do not lose sight of her, your countenance may be of great credit, and of conse-

* By a fire in Northumberland-house, where he had an apartment, in which I have passed many an agreeable hour

¹ Mr. Beauclerk died on March 11 in this year

quence of great advantage to her. The memory of her brother is yet fresh in my mind, he was an ingenious and worthy man.

"Please to make my compliments to your lady, and to the young ladies. I should like to see them, pretty loves. I am dear Sir,

"Yours, affectionately,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"April 8, 1780"

Mrs Thrale being now at Bath with her husband, the correspondence between Johnson and her was carried on briskly. I shall present my readers with one of her original letters to him at this time, which will amuse them probably more than those well written but studied epistles¹ which she has inserted in her collection, because it exhibits the easy vivacity of their literary intercourse. It is also of value as a key to Johnson's answer, which she has printed by itself, and of which I shall subjoin extracts.

Mrs Thrale to Dr Johnson

"I had a very kind letter from you yesterday dear Sir, with a most circumstantial date. You took trouble with my circulating letter, Mr. Evans writes me word, and I thank you sincerely for so doing; one might do mischief else, not being on the spot.

"Yesterday's evening was passed at Mrs Montagu's there was Mr Melmoth, I do not like him though, nor he me, it was expected we should have pleased each other, he is, however, just Tory enough to hate the Bishop of Peterborough for Whiggism, and Whig enough to abhor you for Toryism.

"Mrs Montagu flattered him finely, so he had a good afternoon on't. This evening we spend at a concert. Poor Queeney's^a sore eyes have just released her, she had a long confinement, and could neither read nor write, so my master^b treated her very good-naturedly with the visits of a young woman in this town, a tailor's daughter, who professes musick, and teaches so as to give six lessons a day to ladies, at five and three pence a lesson. Mr Burney says she is a great performer, and I respect the wench for

^a A kind of nick name given to Mrs Thrale's eldest daughter, whose name being *Esther* she might be assimilated to a *Queen*.

^b Mr Thrale.

¹ Other similes she treasured up for Johnson's conversation, and clapped them in her book *opéra compo*. I am glad to see them there again!—*Borealis Maragnolia*.

² Mrs Thrale conjectured that this was the letter Mr Boswell purchased

from the negro Barber for half-a-crown. When the others were printing, Mr Boswell could not restrain his eager curiosity. "I saw a sheet," he wrote to Percy, "at the Printing House, and observed letter 330."

getting her living so prettily, she is very modest and pretty mannered, and not seventeen years old.

"You live in a fine whirl indeed, if I did not write regularly you would half forget me, and that would be very wrong, for I *felt* my regard for you in my *face* last night, when the criticisms were going on.

"This morning it was all connoisseurship, we went to see some pictures painted by a gentleman artist, Mr Taylor, of this place, my master makes one every where, and he has got a dawling¹ companion to ride with him now. * * * * * He looks well enough, but I have no notion of health for a man whose mouth cannot be sewed up. Burney and I and Queeney teize him every meal he eats, and Mr Montagu is quite serious with him, but what *can* one do? He will eat, I think, and if he does eat I know he will not live, it makes me very unhappy, but I must bear it Let me always have your friendship I am, most sincerely, dear Sir,

"Your faithful servant,

"H L T.

"Bath, Friday, April 28"

Dr JOHNSON to Mrs THRALE.

"DEAREST MADAM—Mr Thrale never will live abstinently, till he can persuade himself to live by rule * * * * * Encourage, as you can, the musical girl²

"Nothing is more common than mutual dislike where mutual approbation is particularly expected³ There is often on both sides a vigilance not over benevolent, and as attention is strongly excited, so that nothing drops unheeded, any difference in taste or opinion, and some difference where there is no restraint, will commonly appear, it immediately generates dislike

"Never let criticism operate upon your face or your mind, it is very rarely that an authour is hurt by his criticks The blaze of reputation cannot be blown out, but it often dies in the socket, a very few names may be considered as perpetual lamps that shine

Second Edition—Line 9 "A good dawling companion"

¹ I have taken the liberty to leave out a few lines

¹ "Dawling" is the word in Mr Boswell's and Malone's editions, not "dawdling," as Mr Croker has it

² Three months later she says, "I picked up Piazzi here, the great Italian

singer He shall teach Hester"

³ Mrs Thrale was now complaining of her husband's extravagant passion for Miss Sophy Streatfield

unconsumed. From the authour of 'Fitzosborne's Letters' I cannot think myself in much danger I met him only once about thirty years ago, and in some small dispute reduced him to whistle, having not seen him since, that is the last impression Poor Moore, the fabulist, was one of the company.

"Mrs Montagu's long stay, against her own inclination, is very convenient You would, by your own confession, want a companion, and she is *par pluribus*, conversing with her you may find variety in one."

"London, May 1, 1780 "

On the 2d of May I wrote to him, and requested that we might have another meeting somewhere in the North of England, in the autumn of this year.

From Mr Langton I received soon after this time a letter, of which I extract a passage, relative at once to Mr. Beauclerk and Dr Johnson

"The melancholy information you have received concerning Mr. Beauclerk's death is true. Had his talents been directed in any sufficient degree as they ought, I have always been strongly of opinion that they were calculated to make an illustrious figure, and that opinion, as it had been in part formed upon Dr Johnson's judgement, receives more and more confirmation by hearing, that since his death, Dr Johnson has said concerning them, a few evenings ago, he was at Mr Vesey's, where Lord Althorpe, who was one of a numerous company there, addressed Dr. Johnson on the subject of Mr Beauclerk's death, saying, 'Our CLUB has had a great loss since we met last He replied, 'A loss that perhaps the whole nation could not repair!' The Doctor then went on to speak of his endowments, and particularly extolled the wonderful ease with which he uttered what was highly excellent He said, that no man ever was so free when he was going to say a good thing, from a look that expressed that it was coming, or, when he had said it, from a look that expressed that it *had* come At Mr Thrale's, some days before, when we were talking on the same subject, he said, referring to the same idea of his wonderful facility, 'That Beauclerk's talents were those which he had felt himself more disposed to envy, than those of any whom he had known'

"At the evening I have spoken of above, at Mr Vesey's, you would have been much gratified, as it exhibited an instance of the high importance in which Dr. Johnson's character is held, I think even beyond any I ever before was witness to. The company consisted chiefly of ladies, among whom were the Duchess Dowager of

Portland, the Duchess of Beaufort, whom I suppose from her rank I must name before her mother Mrs Boscawen, and her elder sister Mrs Lewson, who was likewise there, Lady Lucan, Lady Clermont, and others of note both for their station and understandings. Among the gentlemen were, Lord Althorpe, whom I have before named, Lord Macartney, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Lord Lucan, Mr Wraxal,¹ whose book you have probably seen, '*The Tour to the Northern Parts of Europe*;' a very agreeable ingenious man, Dr. Warren, Mr Pepys, the Master in Chancery, whom I believe you know, and Dr Barnard, the Provost of Eton. As soon as Dr Johnson was come in and had taken a chair, the company began to collect round him till they became not less than four if not five deep, those behind standing, and listening over the heads of those that were sitting near him. The conversation for some time was chiefly between Dr. Johnson and the Provost of Eton, while the others contributed occasionally their remarks. Without attempting to detail the particulars of the conversation, which perhaps if I did, I should spin my account out to a tedious length, I thought, my dear Sir, this general account of the respect with which our valued friend was attended to, might be acceptable."

To the Reverend Dr FARMER

"May 23, 1780

"SIR,—I know your disposition to second any literary attempt, and therefore venture upon the liberty of entreating you to procure from College or University registers, all the dates, or other informations which they can supply relating to Ambrose Philips, Broom, and Gray, who were all of Cambridge, and of whose lives I am to give such accounts as I can gather. Be pleased to forgive this trouble, from, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON"

While Johnson was thus engaged in preparing a delightful literary entertainment for the world, the tranquillity of the metropolis of Great-Britain was unexpectedly disturbed, by the most horrid series of outrage that ever disgraced a civilized country. A relaxation of some of the severe penal provisions against our fellow subjects of the Catholic communion had been granted by the legislature, with an opposition so inconsiderable, that the genuine mildness of Christianity, united with liberal policy, seemed to have become

¹ Whose name and highly-flavoured *facts all*
gossip suggested the rhyme. "misquoting

general in this island. But a dark and malignant spirit of persecution soon shewed itself, in an unworthy petition for the repeal of the wise and humane statute That petition was brought forward by a mob, with the evident purpose of intimidation, and was justly rejected. But the attempt was accompanied and followed by such daring violence as is unexampled in history Of this extraordinary tumult, Dr Johnson has given the following concise, lively, and just account in his "Letters to Mrs. Thrale."

"On Friday, the good Protestants met in St George's-Fields, at the summons of Lord George Gordon, and marching to Westminster, insulted the Lords and Commons, who all bore it with great tameness. At night the outrages began by the demolition of the mass-house by Lincoln s-Inn "

"An exact journal of a week's defiance of government I cannot give you On Monday, Mr Strahan, who had been insulted, spoke to Lord Mansfield, who had I think been insulted too, of the licentiousness of the populace, and his Lordship treated it as a very slight irregularity On Tuesday night they pulled down Fielding's house, and burnt his goods in the street They had gutted on Monday Sir George Savile's house, but the building was saved. On Tuesday evening, leaving Fielding's ruins, they went to Newgate to demand their companions who had been seized demolishing the chapel The keeper could not release them but by the Mayor's permission, which he went to ask, at his return he found all the prisoners released, and Newgate in a blaze They then went to Bloomsbury, and fastened upon Lord Mansfield's house, which they pulled down, and as for his goods, they totally burnt them They have since gone to Caen wood, but a guard was there before them. They plundered some Papists, I think, and burnt a mass-house in Moorfields the same night "

"On Wednesday I walked with Dr Scot to look at Newgate, and found it in ruins, with the fire yet glowing As I went by, the Protestants were plundering the Sessions house at the Old Bailey There were not, I believe, a hundred, but they did their work at leisure, in full security, without sentinels, without trepidation, as men lawfully employed, in full day Such is the cowardice of a commercial place On Wednesday they broke open the Fleet, and the King's-bench, and the Marshalsea, and Wood-street Compter, and Clerkenwell Bridewell, and released all the prisoners "

"At night they set fire to the Fleet, and to the King's-bench, and

* Vol II p 143, *et seq* I have selected passages from several letters, without mentioning dates.

I know not how many other places; and one might see the glare of conflagration fill the sky from many parts. The light was dreadful. Some people were threatened: Mr. Strahan advised me to take care of myself. Such a time of terror you have been happy in not seeing."

"The King said in council, 'That the magistrates had not done their duty, but that he would do his own,' and a proclamation was published, directing us to keep our servants within doors, as the peace was now to be preserved by force. The soldiers were sent out to different parts, and the town is now at quiet."

"The soldiers are stationed so as to be every where within call: there is no longer any body of rioters, and the individuals are haunted to their holes, and led to prison, Lord George was last night sent to the Tower. Mr John Wilkes was this day in my neighbourhood, to seize the publishers of a seditious paper."

"Several chapels have been destroyed, and several inoffensive Papists have been plundered. but the high sport was to burn the gaols. This was a good rabble trick. The debtors and criminals were all set at liberty, but of the criminals, as has always happened, many are already re-taken, and two pirates have surrendered themselves, and it is expected that they will be pardoned."

"Government now acts again with its proper force, and we are all again under the protection of the King and the law. I thought that it would be agreeable to you and my master to have my testimony to the publick security, and that you would sleep more quietly when I told you that you are safe."

"There has, indeed, been an universal panick, from which the King was the first that recovered. Without the concurrence of his ministers, or the assistance of the civil magistrate, he put the soldiers in motion, and saved the town from calamities, such as a rabble's government must naturally produce."

"The publick has escaped a very heavy calamity. The rioters attempted the Bank on Wednesday night, but in no great number, and like other thieves, with no great resolution. Jack Wilkes headed the party that drove them away. It is agreed, that if they had seized the Bank on Tuesday, at the height of the panick, when no resistance had been prepared, they might have carried irrecoverably away whatever they had found. Jack who was always zealous for order and decency, declares, that if he be trusted with power, he will not leave a rioter alive. There is, however, now no longer any need of heroism or bloodshed, no blue ribband is any longer worn."¹

¹ Mr. Croker calls attention to "a remarkable omission" of a paragraph re-

Such was the end of this miserable sedition, from which London was delivered by the magnanimity of the Sovereign himself. Whatever some may maintain, I am satisfied that there was no combination or plan, either domestick or foreign, but that the mischief spread by a gradual contagion of frenzy, augmented by the quantities of fermented liquors, of which the deluded populace possessed themselves in the course of their depredations.

I should think myself very much to blame, did I here neglect to do justice to my esteemed friend Mr Akerman, the keeper of Newgate, who has long discharged a very important trust with an uniform intrepid firmness, and at the same time a tenderness and a liberal charity, which entitle him to be recorded with distinguished honour.

Upon this occasion, from the timidity and negligence of magistracy on the one hand, and the almost incredible exertions of the mob on the other, the first prison of this great country was laid open, and the prisoners set free, but that Mr. Akerman, whose house was burnt, would have prevented all this, had proper aid been sent to him in due time, there can be no doubt.

Many years ago, a fire broke out in the back part which was built as an addition to the old gaol of Newgate. The prisoners were in consternation and tumult, calling out, "We shall be burnt—we shall be burnt! down with the gate—down with the gate!" Mr Akerman hastened to them, shewed himself at the gate, and having, after some confused vociferation of "Hear him—hear him!" obtained a silent attention, he then calmly told them, that the gate must not go down, that they were under his care, and that they should not be permitted to escape, but that he could assure them, they need not be afraid of being burnt, for that the fire was not in the prison, properly so called, which was strongly built with stone, and that if they would engage to be quiet, he himself would come in to them, and conduct them to the further end of the building, and would not go out till they gave him leave. To this proposal they agreed, upon which Mr Akerman, having first made them fall back from the gate, went in, and with a determined resolution ordered the outer turnkey upon no account to open the gate, even though the prisoners (though he trusted they would not) should break their word, and by force bring himself to order it. "Never mind me, (said he,) should that happen." The prisoners peaceably followed him, while he conducted them through passages,

leading to an invasion of London by the Scots and which he supposes was distasteful to Boswell. It will be found,

however, that in the original other paragraphs follow, and that he did not leave out, but merely left off.

of which he had the keys, to the extremity of the gaol, which was most distant from the fire. Having, by this very judicious conduct, fully satisfied them that there was no immediate risk, if any at all, he then addressed them thus: "Gentlemen, you are now convinced that I told you true. I have no doubt that the engines will soon extinguish this fire: if they should not, a sufficient guard will come, and you shall all be taken out and be lodged in the Compters. I assure you, upon my word and honour, that I have not a farthing insured. I have left my house that I might take care of you. I will keep my promise, and stay with you, if you insist upon it: but if you will allow me to go out and look after my family and property, I will be obliged to you." Struck with his behaviour, they called out, "Master Akerman, you have done bravely, it was very kind in you: by all means go and take care of your own concerns." He did so accordingly, while they remained and were all preserved.

Johnson has been heard to relate the substance of this story with high praise, in which he was joined by Mr Burke. My illustrious friend, speaking of Mr Akerman's kindness to his prisoners, pronounced this eulogy upon his character—"He who has long had constantly in his view the worst of mankind, and is yet eminent for the humanity of his disposition, must have had it originally in a great degree, and continued to cultivate it very carefully."

In the course of this month my brother David waited upon Dr Johnson, with the following letter of introduction, which I had taken care should be lying ready on his arrival in London.

To Dr SAMUEL JOHNSON

"Edinburgh, April 29, 1780

"MY DEAR SIR,—This will be delivered to you by my brother David, on his return from Spain. You will be glad to see the man who vowed to 'stand by the old castle of Auchinleck, with heart, purse, and sword,' that romantick family solemnity devised by me, of which you and I talked with complacency upon the spot.¹ I trust that twelve years of absence have not lessened his feudal

¹ A sketch of David by his brother "He is a sensible, intelligent, accurate man, very formal and prudent." In short, as different from me in his manner, and general way of thinking as you can suppose. But I trust he is a man of good principles. He was very happy in the romanuc scenes of Auchinleck. . . He

says he found out that men who speculate on life as you and I do, are not successful in substantial concerns. He is in the right, I am afraid."—*Letter to Temple*, November 3, 1780. David had been promised compensation for his losses in Spain by Dundas—a promise which seems never to have been fulfilled.

attachment, and that you will find him worthy of being introduced to your acquaintance.

"I have the honour to be, with affectionate veneration, my dear Sir,

"Your most faithful humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

Johnson received him very politely, and has thus mentioned him in a letter to Mrs Thrale.* "I have had with me a brother of Boswell's, a Spanish merchant,^b whom the war has driven from his residence at Valencia; he is gone to see his friends, and will find Scotland but a sorry place after twelve years' residence in a happier climate. He is a very agreeable man, and speaks no Scotch."

To Dr BEATTIE at ABERDEEN.

"SIR,—More years^c than I have any delight to reckon, have past since you and I saw one another, of this, however, there is no reason for making any reprehensory complaint, *Sic fata ferunt*. But methinks there might pass some small interchange of regard between us. If you say, that I ought to have written, I now write, and I write to tell you, that I have much kindness for you and Mrs. Beattie, and that I wish your health better, and your life long. Try change of air, and come a few degrees Southwards, a softer climate may do you good; winter is coming on, and London will be warmer, and gayer, and busier, and more fertile of amusement than Aberdeen.

"My health is better, but that will be little in the balance, when I tell you that Mrs Montagu has been very ill, and is I doubt now but weakly. Mr Thrale has been very dangerously disordered; but is much better, and I hope will totally recover. He has withdrawn himself from business the whole summer. Sir Joshua and his sister are well; and Mr. Davies has had great success as an authour,^d generated by the corruption of a bookseller. More news I have not to tell you, and therefore you must be contented with

* Vol II p 163 Mrs Piozzi has omitted the name, she best knows why

^b Now settled in London.

^c I had been five years absent from London BEATTIE

^d Meaning his entertaining "Memours of David Garrick, Esq," of which Johnson (as Davies informed me) wrote the first sentence, thus giving as it were, the keynote to the performance. It is, indeed, very characteristic of its authour, beginning with a maxim, and proceeding to illustrate—"All excellence has a right to be recorded. I shall, therefore, think it superfluous to apologise for writing the life of a man, who by an uncommon assemblage of private virtues, adorned the highest eminence in a publick profession."

hearing, what I know not whether you much wish to hear,* that I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street,
August 21, 1780 "

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—I find you have taken one of your fits of taciturnity, and have resolved not to write till you are written to; it is but a peevish humour, but you shall have your way.

"I have sate at home in Bolt-court, all the summer, thinking to write the *Lives*, and a great part of the time only thinking. Several of them, however, are done, and I still think to do the rest.

"Mr Thrale and his family have, since his illness, passed their time first at Bath, and then at Brighthelmston, but I have been at neither place. I would have gone to Lichfield, if I could have had time, and I might have had time, if I had been active, but I have missed much, and done little.

"In the late disturbances, Mr Thrale's house and stock were in great danger, the mob was pacified at their first invasion, with about fifty pounds in drink and meat, and at their second, were driven away by the soldiers.¹ Mr Strahan got a garrison into his house, and maintained them a fortnight, he was so frightened that he removed part of his goods. Mrs Williams took shelter in the country.

"I know not whether I shall get a ramble this autumn, it is now about the time when we were travelling. I have, however, better health than I had then, and hope you and I may yet shew ourselves on some parts of Europe, Asia, or Africa.^b In the mean

* I wish he had omitted the suspicion expressed here, though I believe he meant nothing but jocularity, for though he and I differed sometimes in opinion, he well knew how much I loved and revered him. BEATTIE

^b It will, no doubt be remarked how he avoids the *rebellious* land of America. This puts me in mind of an anecdote, for which I am obliged to my worthy friend, Governour Penn. "At one of Miss E. Hickey's assemblies, Dr Johnson was following her up and down the room, upon which Lord Abington observed to her, 'Your great friend is very fond of you, you can go no where without him.'—'Aye, (said she,) he would follow me to any part of the world.'—Then (said the Earl,) ask him to go with you to *America*.' "

¹ Their brewhouse was saved by the tact and presence of mind of Perkins, who "amused the mob with meat and drink and burras until Sir Philip (Clerk) could get troops, and pack up the count-

ing-house bills, &c."—*Thraliana*. Perkins was rewarded with 200 guineas, and his wife received a silver urn, with the appropriate motto, "*Molus responsio uram averti*."

time let us play no trick, but keep each other's kindness by all means in our power

"The bearer of this is Dr Dunbar, of Aberdeen, who has written and published a very ingenious book,* and who I think has a kindness for me, and will when he knows you have a kindness for you

"I suppose your little ladies are grown tall, and your son is become a learned young man I love them all, and I love your naughty lady, whom I never shall persuade to love me When the Lives are done, I shall send them to complete her collection, but must send them in paper, as for want of a pattern, I cannot bind them to fit the rest I am, Sir,

"Yours most affectionately,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"London Aug 21, 1790"

This year he wrote to a young clergyman in the country, the following very excellent letter, which contains valuable advice to Divines in general.

"DEAR SIR, —Not many days ago Dr Lawence shewed me a letter, in which you make mention of me I hope, therefore, you will not be displeased that I endeavour to preserve your good-will by some observations which your letter suggested to me

"You are afraid of falling into some improprieties in the daily service, by reading to an audience that requires no exactness Your fear, I hope, secures you from danger They who contract absurd habits are such as have no fear It is impossible to do the same thing, very often, without some peculiarity of manner but that manner may be good or bad, and a little care will at least preserve it from being bad to make it very good, there must, I think, be something of natural or casual felicity, which cannot be taught.

"Your present method of making your sermons seems very judicious Few frequent preachers can be supposed to have sermons more their own than yours will be Take care to register, somewhere or other, the authours from whom your several discourses are borrowed, and do not imagine that you shall always remember, even what perhaps you now think it impossible to forget

"My advice, however, is, that you attempt, from time to time, an original sermon, and in the labour of composition, do not burden your mind with too much at once, do not exact from yourself, at one effort of excogitation, propriety of thought and elegance

* "Lives on the History of Mankind"

of expression. Invent first, and then embellish. The production of something, where nothing was before, is an act of greater energy than the expansion or decoration of the thing produced. Set down diligently your thoughts as they rise, in the first words that occur, and, when you have matter, you will easily give it form nor, perhaps, will this method be always necessary, for, by habit, your thoughts and diction will flow together.

"The composition of sermons is not very difficult. the divisions not only help the memory of the hearer, but direct the judgement of the writer, they supply sources of invention, and keep every part in its proper place

"What I like least in your letter is your account of the manners of your parish; from which I gather, that it has been long neglected by the parson The Dean of Carlisle,* who was then a little rector in Northamptonshire, told me, that it might be discerned whether or no there was a clergyman resident in a parish, by the civil or savage manner of the people Such a congregation as yours stands in much need of reformation, and I would not have you think it impossible to reform them A very savage parish was civilised by a decayed gentlewoman, who came among them to teach a petty school My learned friend Dr Wheeler of Oxford, when he was a young man, had the care of a neighbouring parish for fifteen pounds a year, which he was never paid, but he counted it a convenience that it compelled him to make a sermon weekly One woman he could not bring to the communion, and when he reproved or exhorted her, she only answered, that she was no scholar He was advised to set some good woman or man of the parish, a little wiser than herself, to talk to her in language level to her mind. Such honest, I may call them holy artifices, must be practised by every clergyman, for all means must be tried by which souls may be saved. Talk to your people, however, as much as you can, and you will find, that the more frequently you converse with them upon religious subjects, the more willingly they will attend, and the more submissively they will learn A clergyman's diligence always makes him venerable I think I have now only to say, that in the momentous work you have undertaken, I pray God to bless you. I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"Bolt-court, Aug 30, 1780"

"SAM JOHNSON

My next letters to him were of dates August 24, September 6, and October 1, and from them I extract the following passages.

* Dr Percy, now Bishop of Dromore.

"My brother David and I find the long indulged fancy of our comfortable meeting again at Auchinleck, so well realised, that it in some degree confirms the pleasing hope of *O' præclarum diem* ' in a future state

"I beg that you may never again harbour a suspicion of my indulging a peevish humour, or playing tricks, you will recollect, that when I confessed to you, that when I had once been intentionally silent to try your regard, I gave you my word and honour that I should not do so again

"I rejoice to hear of your good state of health, I pray God to continue it long I have often said, that I would willingly have ten years added to my life, to have ten taken from yours, I mean, that I would be ten years older, to have you ten years younger But let me be thankful for the years during which I have enjoyed your friendship, and please myself with the hopes of enjoying it many years to come in this state of being, trusting always, that in another state, we shall meet never to be separated Of this we can form no notion, but the thought, though indistinct, is delightful, when the mind is calm and clear

"The riots in London were certainly horrible, but you give me no account of your own situation, during the barbarous anarchy A description of it by Dr JOHNSON would be a great painting,* you might write another 'LONDON, A POEM

"I am charmed with your condescending affectionate expression, 'let us keep each other's kindness by all the means in our power, my revered Friend! how elevating is it to my mind, that I am found worthy to be a companion to Dr Samuel Johnson! All that you have said in grateful praise of Mr Walmsley, I have long thought of you, but we are both Tories, which has a very general influence upon our sentiments I hope that you will agree to meet me at York, about the end of this month, or if you will come to Carlisle, that would be better still, in case the Dean be there Please to consider, that to keep each other's kindness, we should every year have that free and intimate communication of mind which can be had only when we are together We should have both our solemn and our pleasant talk

"I write now for the third time to tell you that my desire for our meeting this autumn, is much increased I wrote to Squire Godfrey Bosville, my Yorkshire Chief, that I should, perhaps, pay him a visit, as I was to hold a conference with Dr Johnson, at York. I give you my word and honour that I said not a word of his inviting you, but he wrote to me as follows.

* I had not then seen his letters to Mrs Thrale

'I need not tell you I shall be happy to see you here the latter end of this month, as you propose, and I shall likewise be in hopes that you will persuade Dr. Johnson to finish the conference here. It will add to the favour of your own company, if you prevail upon such an associate, to assist your observations. I have often been entertained with his writings, and I once belonged to a club of which he was a member, and I never spent an evening there, but I heard something from him well worth remembering.'

"We have thus, my dear Sir, good comfortable quarters in the neighbourhood of York, where you may be assured we shall be heartily welcome. I pray you then resolve to set out, and let not the year 1780 be a blank in our social calendar, and in that record of wisdom and wit, which I keep with so much diligence, to your honour, and the instruction and delight of others."

Mr Thrale had now another contest for the representation in parliament of the borough of Southwark,¹ and Johnson kindly lent him his assistance, by writing advertisements and letters for him. I shall insert one as a specimen *

"To the worthy ELECTORS of the Borough of SOUTHWARK

"GENTLEMEN,—A new Parliament being now called, I again solicit the honour of being elected for one of your representatives, and solicit it with the greater confidence, as I am not conscious of having neglected my duty, or of having acted otherwise than as becomes the independent representative of independent constituents, superior to fear, hope, and expectation, who has no private purposes to promote, and whose prosperity is involved in the prosperity of his country. As my recovery from a very severe distemper is not yet perfect, I have declined to attend the Hall, and hope an omission so necessary will not be harshly censured.

"I can only send my respectful wishes, that all your deliberations may tend to the happiness of the kingdom, and the peace of the borough. I am, Gentlemen,

"Your most faithful and obedient servant,

"HENRY THRALE

"Southwark, Sept 5, 1780."

On his birth-day, Johnson has this note, "I am now beginning the seventy-second year of my life, with more strength of body, and greater vigour of mind, than I think is common at that age." But still he complains of sleepless nights and idle days, and forgetful-

¹ In which he was defeated.

ness, or neglect of resolutions. He thus pathetically expresses himself, "Surely I shall not spend my whole life with my own total disapprobation"^a

Mr Macbean, whom I have mentioned more than once, as one of Johnson's humble friends, a deserving but unfortunate man, being now oppressed by age and poverty, Johnson solicited the Lord Chancellor Thurlow, to have him admitted into the Charter-house. I take the liberty to insert his Lordship's answer, as I am eager to embrace every occasion of augmenting the respectable notion which should ever be entertained of my illustrious friend —

To Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"London, Oct 24, 1780

"SIR,—I have this moment received your letter, dated the 19th, and returned from Bath.

"In the beginning of the summer I placed one in the Chartreux, without the sanction of a recommendation so distinct, and so authoritative as yours of Macbean, and I am afraid, that according to the establishment of the House, the opportunity of making the charity so good amends will not soon recur. But whenever a vacancy shall happen, if you'll favour me with notice of it, I will try to recommend him to the place, even though it should not be my turn to nominate. I am, Sir, with great regard,

"Your most faithful

"And obedient servant,

"THURLOW "

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—I am sorry to write you a letter that will not please you, and yet it is at last what I resolve to do. This year must pass without an interview, the summer has been foolishly lost, like many other of my summers and winters. I hardly saw a green field, but staid in town to work, without working much.

"Mr Thrale's loss of health has lost him the election; he is now going to Brighthelmston, and expects me to go with him, and how long I shall stay I cannot tell. I do not much like the place, but yet I shall go, and stay while my stay is desired. We must, therefore content ourselves with knowing what we know as well as man can know the mind of man, that we love one another, and that we wish each other's happiness, and that the lapse of a year cannot lessen our mutual kindness.

^a *Prayers and Meditations*, p 185

"I was pleased to be told that I accused Mrs. Boswell unjustly, in supposing that she bears me ill-will. I love you so much, that I would be glad to love all that love you, and that you love, and I have love very ready for Mrs. Boswell, if she thinks it worthy of acceptance. I hope all the young ladies and gentlemen are well.

"I take a great liking to your brother. He tells me that his father received him kindly, but not fondly, however, you seem to have lived well enough at Auchinleck, while you staid. Make your father as happy as you can

"You lately told me of your health I can tell you in return, that my health has been for more than a year past, better than it has been for many years before Perhaps it may please God to give us some time together before we are parted I am, dear Sir,

"Yours, most affectionately,

"SAM JOHNSON

"Oct 17, 1780."

Being disappointed in my hopes of meeting Johnson this year, so that I could hear none of his admirable sayings, I shall compensate for this want by inserting a collection of them, for which I am indebted to my worthy friend Mr. Langton, whose kind communications have been separately interwoven in many parts of this work A very few articles of this collection were committed to writing by himself, he not having that habit, which he regrets, and which those who know the numerous opportunities he had of gathering the rich fruits of *Johnsonian* wit and wisdom must ever regret. I however found, in conversations with him, that a good store of *Johnsoniana* was treasured in his mind; and I compared it to *Herculaneum*, or some old Roman field, which, when dug, fully rewards the labour employed. The authenticity of every article is unquestionable. For the expression, I, who wrote them down in his presence, am partly answerable.

"Theocritus is not deserving of very high respect as a writer, as to the pastoral part, Virgil is very evidently superiour. He wrote when there had been a larger influx of knowledge into the world than when Theocritus lived Theocritus does not abound in description, though living in a beautiful country. the manners painted are coarse and gross. Virgil has much more description, more sentiment, more of Nature, and more of art. Some of the most excellent parts of Theocritus are, where Castor and Pollux, going with the other Argonauts, land on the Bebrycian coast, and there fall into a dispute with Amycus, the King of that country; which is as well conducted as Euripides could have done it, and the battle is well

related Afterwards they carry off a woman, whose two brothers come to recover her, and expostulate with Castor and Pollux on their injustice, but they pay no regard to the brothers, and a battle ensues, where Castor and his brother are triumphant. Theocritus seems not to have seen that the brothers have the advantage in their argument over his Argonaut heroes — ‘The Sicilian Gossips’ is a piece of merit.’

“ Callimachus is a writer of little excellence The chief thing to be learned from him is his account of Rites and Mythology; which, though desirable to be known for the sake of understanding other parts of ancient authours, is the least pleasing or valuable part of their writings ”

“ Mattaire’s account of the *Stephani* is a heavy book He seems to have been a puzzle headed man, with a large share of scholarship, but with little geometry or logick in his head, without method, and possessed of little genius He wrote Latin verses from time to time, and published a set in his old age, which he called ‘*Senilia*,’ in which he shews so little learning or taste in writing, as to make *Carteret* a dicty! — In matters of genealogy it is necessary to give the bare names as they are, but in poetry, and in prose of any elegance in the writing, they require to have inflection given to them — His book of the *Dialects* is a sad heap of confusion, the only way to write on them is to tabulate them with Notes, added at the bottom of the page, and references ”

“ It may be questioned, whether there is not some mistake as to the methods of employing the poor, seemingly on the supposition that there is a certain portion of work left undone for want of persons to do it, but if that is otherwise, and all the materials we have are actually worked up, or all the manufactures we can use or dispose of are already executed, then what is given to the poor, who are to be set at work, must be taken from some who now have it, as time must be taken for learning, according to Sir William Petty’s observation, a certain part of those very materials that, as it is, are properly worked up, must be spoiled by the unskilfulness of novices. We may apply to well meaning, but misjudging persons in particular of this nature, what Giannone said to a monk, who wanted what he called to convert him. ‘*To ses santo ma Tu non ses Filosofo*’ — It is an unhappy circumstance that one might give away five hundred pounds in a year to those that importune in the streets, and not do any good ”

“ There is nothing more likely to betray a man into absurdity

than *condescension*, when he seems to suppose his understanding too powerful for his company."

"Having asked Mr Langton if his father and mother had sate for their pictures, which he thought it right for each generation of a family to do, and being told they had opposed it, he said, 'Sir, among the infractuosities of the human mind, I know not if it may not be one, that there is a superstitious reluctance to sit for a picture'"

"John Gilbert Cooper related, that soon after the publication of his Dictionary, Garrick being asked by Johnson what people said of it, told him, that among other animadversions, it was objected that he cited authorities which were beneath the dignity of such a work, and mentioned Richardson 'Nay, (said Johnson,) I have done worse than that: I have cited thee, David'"

"Talking of expense, he observed, with what munificence a great merchant will spend his money, both from his having it at command, and from his enlarged views by calculation of a good effect upon the whole 'Whereas (said he) you will hardly ever find a country gentleman who is not a good deal disconcerted at an unexpected occasion for his being obliged to lay out ten pounds'"

"When in good humour he would talk of his own writings, with a wonderful frankness and candour, and would even criticise them with the closest severity One day, having read over one of his *Ramblers*, Mr Langton asked him how he liked that paper, he shook his head, and answered, 'too wordy' And at another time, when one was reading his tragedy of 'Irene,' to a company at a house in the country, he left the room, and somebody having asked him the reason of this, he replied, 'Sir, I thought it had been better'"

"Talking of a point of delicate scrupulosity of moral conduct, he said to Mr Langton, 'Men of harder minds than ours will do many things from which you and I would shrink; yet, Sir, they will, perhaps, do more good in life than we But let us try to help one another. If there be a wrong twist, it may be set right. It is not probable that two people can be wrong the same way.'"

"Of the Preface to Capel's *Shakspeare*, he said, 'If the man would have come to me, I would have endeavoured to "endow his purposes with words," for, as it is, "he doth gabble monstrously."'"

"He related, that he had once in a dream a contest of wit with some other person, and that he was very much mortified by imagin-

ing that his opponent had the better of him 'Now (said he) one may mark here the effect of sleep in weakening the power of reflection, for had not my judgement failed me, I should have seen, that the wit of this supposed antagonist, by whose superiority I felt myself depressed, was as much furnished by me, as that which I thought I had been uttering in my own character.'

"One evening in company, an ingenious and learned gentleman read a letter of compliment to him from one of the Professors of a foreign University Johnson, in an irritable fit, thinking there was too much ostentation, said, 'I never receive any of these tributes of applause from abroad One instance I recollect of a foreign publication, in which mention is made of *l' illustre Lockman*.'"

"Of Sir Joshua Reynolds he said, 'Sir, I know no man who has passed through life with more observation than Reynolds'."

"He repeated to Mr. Langton, with great energy, in the Greek, our SAVIOUR's gracious expression concerning the forgiveness of Mary Magdalen, 'Ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκε σε' πορεύου εἰς εἰρήνην. Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace'^a He said, 'the manner of this dismissal is exceedingly affecting'."

"He thus defined the difference between physical and moral truth, 'Physical truth, is, when you tell a thing as it actually is. Moral truth, is, when you tell a thing sincerely and precisely as it appears to you. I say such a one walked across the street, if he really did so I told a physical truth. If I thought so, though I should have been mistaken, I told a moral truth.'"

"Huggins, the translator of Ariosto, and Mr Thomas Warton, in the early part of his literary life, had a dispute concerning that poet, of whom Mr Warton, in his 'Observations on Spencer's Fairy Queen,' gave some account, which Huggins attempted to answer with violence, and said, 'I will *militate* no longer against his *nescience*' Huggins was master of the subject, but wanted expression Mr Warton's knowledge of it was then imperfect, but his manner lively and elegant. Johnson said, 'It appears to me, that Huggins has ball without powder, and Warton powder without ball'."

"Talking of the Farce of 'High Life below Stairs,' he said, 'Here is a Farce, which is really very diverting when you see it acted; and yet one may read it, and not know that one has been reading any thing at all' "

^a Luke vii 50

Second Edition —Line 12 Put the following note —"Secretary to the British Herring Fishery, remarkable for an extraordinary number of occasional verses, not of eminent merit."

"He used at one time to go occasionally to the green-room of Drury-lane Theatre, where he was much regarded by the players, and was very easy and facetious with them. He had a very high opinion of Mrs. Clive's comick powers, and conversed more with her than with any of them. He said, 'Clive, Sir, is a good thing to sit by, she always understands what you say.' And she said of him, 'I love to sit by Dr. Johnson, he always entertains me.' One night, when 'The Recruiting Officer' was acted, he said to Mr. Holland, who had been expressing an apprehension that Dr Johnson would disdain the works of Farquhar, 'No, Sir, I think Farquhar a man whose writings have considerable merit.'"

"His friend Garrick was so busy in conducting the drama, that they could not have so much intercourse as Mr Garrick used to profess an anxious wish that there should be. There might indeed be something in the contemptuous severity as to the merit of acting, which his old preceptor nourished in himself, that would mortify Garrick after the great applause which he received from the audience. For though Johnson said of him, 'Sir, a man who has a nation to admire him every night, may well be expected to be somewhat elated,' yet he would treat theatrical matters with a ludicrous slight. He mentioned one evening, 'I met David coming off the stage, drest in a woman's riding-hood, when he acted in the *The Wonder*, I came full upon him, and I believe he was not pleased' "

"Once he asked Tom Davies, whom he saw drest in a fine suit of clothes, 'And what art thou to-night?' Tom answered, 'The Thane of Ross;' (which it will be recollected is a very inconsiderable character). 'O brave!' said Johnson "

"Of Mr Longley, at Rochester, a gentleman of very considerable learning, whom Dr Johnson met there, he said, 'My heart warms towards him. I was surprized to find in him such a nice acquaintance with the metre in the learned languages, though I was somewhat mortified that I had it not so much to myself, as I should have thought.'"

"Talking of the minuteness with which people will record the sayings of eminent persons, a story was told, that when Pope was on a visit to Spence at Oxford, as they looked from the window they saw a Gentleman Commoner, who was just come in from riding, amusing himself with whipping at a post. Pope took occasion to say, 'That young gentleman seems to have little to do.' Mr. Beauclerk observed, 'Then, to be sure, Spence turned round and wrote that down;' and went on to say to Dr. Johnson, 'Pope, Sir, would have said the same of you, if he had seen you distilling.' JOHNSON.

'Sir, if Pope had told me of my distilling, I would have told him of his grotto '"

"He would allow no settled indulgence of idleness upon principle, and always repelled every attempt to urge excuses for it. A friend one day suggested, that it was not wholesome to study soon after dinner JOHNSON 'Ah, Sir, don't give way to such a fancy At one time of my life I had taken it into my head that it was not wholesome to study between breakfast and dinner.'"

"Mr Beauclerk one day repeated to Dr. Johnson, Pope's lines,

'Let modest Foster, if he will, excel
Ten metropolitans in preaching well '"

Then asked the Doctor, 'Why did Pope say this?' JOHNSON 'Sir, he hoped it would vex somebody '"

"Dr Goldsmith, upon occasion of Mrs Lennox's bringing out a play, said to Dr Johnson at the CLUB, that a person had advised him to go and hiss it, because she had attacked Shakspeare in her book called 'Shakspeare Illustrated' JOHNSON 'And did not you tell him that he was a rascal?' GOLDSMITH. 'No, Sir, I did not. Perhaps he might not mean what he said' JOHNSON 'Nay, Sir, if he lied it is a different thing' Colman shily said, (but it is believed Dr Johnson did not hear him,) 'Then the proper expression should have been,—Sir, if you don't lie you're a rascal.'"

"His affection for Topham Beauclerk was so great, that when Beauclerk was labouring under that severe illness which at last occasioned his death, Johnson said, (with a voice faltering with emotion,) 'Sir, I would walk to the extent of the diameter of the earth to save Beauclerk '"

"One night at the CLUB he produced a translation of an Epitaph which Lord Elibank had written in English, for his Lady, and requested of Johnson to turn into Latin for him. Having read *Domina de North et Gray*, he said to Dyer, 'You see, Sir, what barbarisms we are compelled to make use of, when modern titles are to be specifically mentioned in Latin inscriptions' When he had read it once aloud, and there had been a general approbation expressed by the company, he addressed himself to Mr Dyer in particular, and said, 'Sir, I beg to have your judgement, for I know your nicety.' Dyer then very properly desired to read it over

¹ Foster was a dissenting clergyman of average powers, and Beauclerk might fairly ask the motive of such extravagant praise Yet Mr Croker offers the following strange speculation "Mr Beau-

clerk probably meant to ask—what is by no means so clear—how these two lines bear on Pope's general design and argument."

again; which, having done, he pointed out an incongruity in one of the sentences. Johnson immediately assented to the observation, and said, 'Sir, this is owing to an alteration of a part of the sentence, from the form in which I had first written it, and I believe, Sir, you may have remarked, that it is a very frequent cause of error in composition, when one has made a partial change, without a due regard to the general structure of the sentence.'

"Johnson was well acquainted with Mr Dossie, authour of a treatise on Agriculture, and said of him, 'Sir, of the objects which the Society of Arts have chiefly in view, the chymical effects of bodies operating upon other bodies, he knows more than almost any man' Johnson, in order to give Mr. Dossie his vote to be a member of this Society, paid up an arrear which had run on for two years. On this occasion he mentioned a circumstance, as characteristick of the Scotch. 'One of that nation, (said he,) who had been a candidate, against whom I had voted, came up to me with a civil salutation. Now, Sir, this is their way. An Englishman would have stomached it, and been sulky, and never have taken further notice of you but a Scotchman, Sir, though you vote nineteen times against him, will accost you with equal complaisance after each time, and the twentieth time, Sir, he will get your vote.'

"Talking on the subject of toleration, one day when some friends were with him in his study, he made his usual remark, that the State has a right to regulate the religion of the people, who are the children of the State. A clergyman having readily acquiesced in this, Johnson, who loved discussion, observed, 'But, Sir, you must go round to other States than our own. You do not know what a Bramin has to say for himself. In short, Sir, I have got no farther than this. Every man has a right to utter what he thinks truth, and every other man has a right to knock him down for it. Martyrdom is the test'

"A man, he observed, should begin to write soon, for, if he waits till his judgement is matured, his inability, through want of practice to express his conceptions, will make the disproportion so great between what he sees, and what he can attain, that he will probably be discouraged from writing at all. As a proof of the justness of this remark, we may instance what is related of the

Second Edition, note on line 30.—Here Lord Macartney remarks, "A Bramin or any cast of the Hindoos will neither admit you to be of their religion, nor be converted to yours a thing which struck the Portuguese with the greatest astonishment, when they first discovered the East Indies."

great Lord Granville, that after he had written his letter, giving an account of the battle of Dettingen, he said, 'Here is a letter, expressed in terms not good enough for a tallow-chandler to have used.'

"Talking of a Court martial that was sitting upon a very momentous publick occasion, he expressed much doubt of an enlightened decision, and said, that perhaps there was not a member of it, who in the whole course of his life, had ever spent an hour by himself in balancing probabilities."

"Goldsmith one day brought to the CLUB a printed Ode, which he, with others, had been hearing read by its authour in a publick room, at the rate of five shillings each for admission. One of the company having read it aloud, Dr. Johnson said, 'Bolder words, and more timorous meaning, I think never were brought together' "

"Talking of Gray's Odes, he said, 'They are forced plants, raised in a hot bed, and they are poor plants; they are but cucumbers after all.' A gentleman present, who had been running down Ode writing in general, as a bad species of poetry, unluckily said, 'Had they been literally cucumbers, they had been better things than Odes' — 'Yes, Sir, (said Johnson,) for a *hog*' "

"His distinction of the different degrees of attainment of learning was thus marked upon two occasions. Of Queen Elizabeth he said, 'She had learning enough to have given dignity to a Bishop' and of Mr Thomas Davies he said, 'Sir, Davies has learning enough to give credit to a clergyman' "

"He used to quote, with great warmth, the saying of Aristotle recorded by Diogenes Laertius, that there was the same difference between one learned and unlearned, as between the living and the dead "

"It is very remarkable, that he retained in his memory very slight and trivial, as well as important things. As an instance of this, it seems that an inferiour domestick of the Duke of Leeds had attempted to celebrate his Grace's marriage in such homely rhymes as he could make, and this curious composition having been sung to Dr. Johnson he got it by heart, and used to repeat it in a very pleasant manner. Two of the stanzas were these :

'When the Duke of Leeds shall married be
To a fine young lady of high quality,
How happy will that gentlewoman be
In his Grace of Leeds's good company.

'She shall have all that's fine and fair,
And the best of silk and sattin shall wear;

And ride in a coach to take the air,
And have a house in St James's-square.'

To hear a man, of the weight and dignity of Johnson, repeating such humble attempts at poetry, had a very amusing effect. He, however, seriously observed of the last stanza, that it nearly comprized all the advantages that wealth can give "

"An eminent foreigner, when he was shewn the British Museum, was very troublesome with many absurd inquiries. 'Now, there, Sir, (said he,) is the difference between an Englishman and a Frenchman. A Frenchman must be always talking, whether he knows any thing of the matter or not: an Englishman is content to say nothing, when he has nothing to say.'"

"His unjust contempt for foreigners was, indeed, extreme. One evening, at Old Slaughter's coffee-house, when a number of them were talking loud about little matters, he said, 'Does not this confirm old Meynell's observation—For any thing I see, foreigners are fools.'"

"He said, that once, when he had a violent tooth-ache, a Frenchman accosted him thus: *Ah, Monsieur, vous etudiez trop* "

"Having spent an evening at Mr Langton's, with the Reverend Dr. Parr, he was much pleased with the conversation of that learned gentleman, and, after he was gone, said to Mr Langton, 'Sir, I am obliged to you for having asked me this evening. Parr is a fair man. I do not know when I have had an occasion of such free controversy. It is remarkable how much of a man's

Cor et Ad—Line 2 On "St James's square" put the following note—"The correspondent of the Gentleman's Magazine who subscribes himself SCIOIUS, furnishes the following supplement—

'A lady of my acquaintance remembers to have heard her uncle sing those homely stanzas more than forty-five years ago. He repeated the second thus,

She shall breed young lords and ladies fur,
And ride abroad in a coach and three pair,
And the best, &c
And have a house, &c.

And remembered a third which seems to have been the introductory one, and is believed to have been the only remaining one

When the Duke of Leeds shall have made his choice
Of a charming young lady that's beautiful and wise,
She'll be the happiest young gentlewoman under the skies,
As long as the sun and moon shall rise,
And how happy shall, &c

It is with pleasure I add that this stanza could never be more truly applied than at this present time¹

¹ 1793.

life may pass without meeting with any instance of this kind of open discussion."

"We may fairly institute a criticism between Shakspeare and Corneille, as they both had, though in a different degree, the lights of a latter age. It is not so just between the Greek dramatick writers and Shakspeare. It may be replied to what is said by one of the remarkers on Shakspeare, that though Darius's shade had *prescience*, it does not necessarily follow that he had all *past* particulars revealed to him."

"Spanish plays, being wildly and improbably farcical, would please children here, as children are entertained with stories full of prodigies, their experience not being sufficient to cause them to be so readily startled at deviations from the natural course of life. The machinery of the Pagans is uninteresting to us. when a Goddess appears in Homer or Virgil, we grow weary, still more so in the Grecian tragedies, as in that kind of composition a nearer approach to Nature is intended. Yet there are good reasons for reading romances, as the fertility of invention, the beauty of style, and expression, the curiosity of seeing with what kind of performances the age and country in which they were written was delighted for it is to be apprehended, that at the time when very wild improbable tales were well received, the people were in a barbarous state, and so on the footing of children, as has been explained."

"It is evident enough that no one who writes now can use the Pagan deities and mythology, the only machinery, therefore, seems that of ministering spirits, the ghosts of the departed, witches, and fairies, though these latter, as the vulgar superstition concerning them (which, while in its force, infected at least the imagination of those that had more advantage in education, and only their reason set them free from it,) is every day wearing out, seem likely to be of little further assistance in the machinery of poetry. As I recollect Hammond introduces a hag or witch into one of his love elegies, where the effect is unmeaning and disgusting."

"The man who uses his talent of ridicule in creating or grossly exaggerating the instances he gives, who imputes absurdities that did not happen, or when a man was a little ridiculous, describes him as having been very much so, abuses his talents greatly. The great use of delineating absurdities is, that we may know how far human folly can go, the account, therefore, ought of absolute necessity to be faithful. A certain character (naming the person) as to the general cast of it, is well described by Garrick, but a great deal of the phraseology he uses in it, is quite his own, particularly

in the proverbial comparisons, 'obstinate as a pig,' &c but I don't know whether it might not be true of him, that from a too great eagerness for praise and popularity, and a politeness carried to a ridiculous excess, he was likely, after asserting a thing in general, to give it up again in parts. For instance, if he had said Reynolds was the first of painters, he was capable enough of giving up, as objections might happen to be severally made, first, his outline—then the grace in form—then the colouring—and lastly, to have owned that he was such a mannerist, that the disposition of his pictures was all alike."

"For hospitality, as formerly practised, there is no longer the same reason, heretofore the poorer people were more numerous, and from want of commerce, their means of getting a livelihood more difficult, therefore the supporting them was an act of great benevolence, now that the poor can find maintenance for themselves and their labour is wanted, a general undiscerning hospitality tends to ill, by withdrawing them from their work to idleness and drunkenness. Then formerly rents were received in kind, so that there was a great abundance of provisions in possession of the owners of the lands, which since the plenty of money afforded by commerce is no longer the case."

"Hospitality to strangers and foreigners in our country is now almost at an end, since from the increase of them that come to us, there have been a sufficient number of people that have found an interest in providing inns and proper accommodations, which is in general a more expedient method for the entertainment of travellers. Where the travellers and strangers are few, more of that hospitality subsists, as it has not been worth while to provide places of accommodation. In Ireland there is still hospitality to strangers, in some degree, in Hungary and Poland probably more."

"Colman, in a note on his translation of Terence, talking of Shakspeare's learning, asks, 'What says Farmer to this?'—What says Johnson?' Upon this he observed, 'Sir, let Farmer answer for himself I never engaged in this controversy I always said, Shakspeare had Latin enough to grammaticise his English.'"

"A clergyman, whom he characterised as one who loved to say little oddities, was affecting one day, at a Bishop's table, a sort of slyness and freedom not in character, and repeated, as if part of 'The Old Man's Wish,' a song by Dr. Walter Pope, a verse bordering on licentiousness. Johnson rebuked him in the finest manner, by first showing him that he did not know the passage he was aiming at, and thus humbling him. 'Sir, that is not the song: it is thus.' And he gave it right. Then looking stedfastly on him,

'Sir, there is a part of that song which I should wish to exemplify in my own life

'May I govern my passions with absolute sway.'

"Being asked if Barnes knew a good deal of Greek, he answered, 'I doubt, Sir, he was *unoculus inter cæcos*' "

"He used frequently to observe, that men might be very eminent in a profession, without our perceiving any particular power of mind in them in conversation 'It seems strange (said he,) that a man should see so far to the right, who sees so short a way to the left Burke is the only man whose common conversation corresponds with the general fame which he had in the world Take up whatever topick you please, he is ready to meet you'"

"A gentleman, by no means deficient in literature, having discovered less acquaintance with one of the Classics than Johnson expected, when the gentleman left the room he observed, 'You see, now, how little any body reads' Mr Langton happening to mention his having read a good deal in Clinardus's Greek Grammar, 'Why, Sir, (said he,) who is there in this town who knows any thing of Clinardus but you and I?' And upon Mr Langton's mentioning that he had taken the pains to learn by heart the Epistle of St. Basil, which is given in that Grammar as a praxis, 'Sir, (said he,) I never made such an effort to attain Greek'"

"Of Dodsley's 'Publick Virtue a Poem,' he said, 'It was fine *blank*, (meaning to express his usual contempt for blank verse): however, this miserable poem did not sell, and my poor friend Doddy said, Publick Virtue was not a subject to interest the age'"

"Mr. Langton, when a very young man, read Dodsley's 'Cleonea Tragedy,' to him, not aware of his extreme impatience to be read to As it went on he turned his face to the back of his chair, and put himself into various attitudes, which marked his uneasiness. At the end of an act, however, he said, 'Come let's have some more, let's go into the slaughter house again, Lanky But I am afraid there is more blood than brains' Yet he afterwards said, 'When I heard you read it, I thought higher of its power of language When I read it myself, I was more sensible of its pathetic effect,' and then paid it a compliment which many will think very extravagant 'Sir, (said he,) if Otway had written this play, no other of his pieces would have been remembered' Dodsley himself, upon this being repeated to him, said, 'It was too much:'

it must be remembered, that Johnson always appeared not to be sufficiently sensible of the merit of Otway."

"Snatches of reading (said he) will not make a Bentley or a Clarke They are, however, in a certain degree advantageous I would put a child into a library (where no unfit books are) and let him read at his choice. A child should not be discouraged from reading any thing that he takes a liking to, from a notion that it is above his reach If that be the case, the child will soon find it out and desist, if not, he of course gains the instruction, which is so much the more likely to come, from the inclination with which he takes up the study."

"Though he used to censure carelessness with great vehemence, he owned, that he once, to avoid the trouble of locking up five guineas, hid them, he forgot where, so that he could not find them "

"A gentleman who introduced his brother to Dr Johnson, was earnest to recommend him to the Doctor's notice, which he did by saying, 'When we have sat together some time, you'll find my brother grow very entertaining '—'Sir, (said Johnson,) I can wait '"

"When the rumour was strong that we should have a war, because the French would assist the Americans, he rebuked a friend with some asperity for supposing it, saying, 'No, Sir, national faith is not yet sunk so low ' "

"In the latter part of his life, in order to satisfy himself whether his mental faculties were impaired, he resolved that he would try to learn a new language, and fixed upon the Low Dutch, for that purpose, and this he continued till he had read about one half of 'Thomas à Kempis,' and finding that there appeared no abatement of his power of acquisition, he then desisted, as thinking the experiment had been duly tried Mr. Burke justly observed, that this was not the most vigorous trial, Low Dutch being a language so near to our own, had it been one of the languages entirely different, he might have been very soon satisfied "

"Mr. Langton and he having gone to see a Fremason's funeral procession, when they were at Rochester, and some solemn musick being played on French-horns, he said, 'This is the first time that I have ever been affected by musical sounds ' adding, 'that the impression made upon him was of a melancholy kind ' Mr. Langton saying, that this effect was a fine one. JOHNSON 'Yes, if it softens the mind so as to prepare it for the reception of salutary feelings, it may be good But inasmuch as it is melancholy *per se*, it is bad ' "

"Goldsmith had long a visionary project, that some time or other

when his circumstances should be easier, he would go to Aleppo, in order to acquire a knowledge as far as might be, of any arts peculiar to the East, and introduce them into Britain. When this was talked of in Dr. Johnson's company, he said, 'Of all men Goldsmith is the most unfit to go out upon such an inquiry, for he is utterly ignorant of such arts as we already possess, and consequently could not know what would be accessions to our present stock of mechanical knowledge. Sir, he would bring home a grinding-barrow, which you see in every street in London, and think that he had furnished a wonderful improvement.'

"Greek, Sir, (said he,) is like lace, every man gets as much of it as he can."

"When Lord Charles Hay, after his return from America, was preparing his defence to be offered to the Court-Martial which he had demanded, having heard Mr. Langton as high in expressions of admiration of Johnson, as he usually was, he requested that Dr. Johnson might be introduced to him, and Mr. Langton having mentioned it to Johnson, he very kindly and readily agreed, and being presented to his Lordship, while under arrest, by Mr. Langton, he saw him several times, upon one of which occasions Lord Charles read to him what he had prepared, which Johnson signified his approbation of, saying, 'It is a very good soldierly defence.' Johnson said, that he had advised his Lordship, that as it was in vain to contend with those who were in possession of power, if they would offer him the rank of Lieutenant-General, and a government, it would be better judged to desist from urging his complaints. It is well known that his Lordship died before the trial came on."

"Johnson one day gave high praise to Dr. Bentley's verses* in Dodsley's Collection, which he recited with his usual energy. Dr. Adam Smith, who was present, observed in his decisive professorial

Cor et Ad—Line 27. For "trial came on" read "sentence was made known."

* Dr. Johnson, in his *Life of Cowley*, says, that these are "the only English verses which Bentley is known to have written." I shall here insert them, and hope my readers will apply them.

"Who strives to Mount Parnassus' hill,
And thence poetick laurels bring,
Must first acquire due force and skill,
Must fly with swan's or eagle's wing

"Who Nature's treasures would explore,
Her mysteries and arcana know,
Must high as lofty Newton soar,
Must stoop as delving Woodward low.

"Who studies ancient laws and rites,
Tongues, arts, and arms, and history,
Must drudge, like Seldon, days and nights,
And in the endless labour die

manner, 'Very well—Very well.' Johnson however added, 'Yes, they *are* very well, Sir, but you may observe in what manner they are well. They are the forcible verses of a man of a strong mind, but not accustomed to write verse; for there is some uncouthness in the expression.' "

" Drinking tea one day at Garrick's with Mr. Langton, he was questioned if he was not somewhat of a heretick as to Shakspeare, said Garrick, 'I doubt he is a little of an infidel.'—'Sir (said Johnson,) I will stand by the lines I have written on Shakspeare, in my Prologue at the opening of your Theatre.' Mr Langton suggested, that in the line

'And panting Time toil'd after him in vain;'

Johnson might have had in his eye the passage in the 'Tempest,' where Prospero says of Miranda,

'————— She will outstrip all praise,
And make it halt behind her'

Johnson said nothing. Garrick then ventured to observe, 'I do not think that the happiest line in the praise of Shakspeare.' Johnson

"Who travels in religious jars,
(Truth mixt with error, shades with rays),
Like Whiston, wanting pyx or stars,
In ocean wide, or sinks or strays.

"But grant our hero's hope, long toil
And comprehensive genius crown,
All sciences, all arts his spoil,
Yet what reward, or what renown?

"Envy, innate in vulgar souls,
Envy steps in and stops his rise,
Envy with poison'd tarnish fouls
His lustre and his worth decies.

"He lives inglorious or in want,
To College and old books confin'd;
Instead of learn'd he's call'd pedant,
Dunces advanc'd, he's left behind
Yet left content a genuine Stoick he,
Great without patron, rich without South Sea."

Cor. et Ad—Line 5 On "expression" put the following note—"The difference between Johnson and Smith is apparent even in this slight instance. Smith was a man of extraordinary application, and had his mind crowded with all manner of subjects, but the force, acuteness, and vivacity of Johnson were not to be found there. He had book-making so much in his thoughts, and was so chary of what might be turned to account in that way, that he once said to Sir Joshua Reynolds, that he made it a rule when in company, never to talk of what he understood. Beauclerk had for a short time a pretty high opinion of Smith's conversation. Garrick, after listening to him for a while, as to one of whom his expectations had been raised, turned slyly to a friend, and whispered him, 'What say you to this?—eh? *flabby*, I think.'"

exclaimed (smiling) 'Prosaical rogues, next time I write, I'll make both time and space pant.' '*

"It is well known that there was formerly a rude custom for those who were sailing upon the Thames, to accost each other as they passed in the most abusive language they could invent, generally, however with as much satirical humour as they were capable of producing. Addison gives a specimen of this ribaldry, in Number 383 of 'The Spectator,' when Sir Roger de Coverley and he are going to Spring-garden. Johnson was once eminently successful in this species of contest, a fellow having attacked him with some coarse raillery, Johnson answered thus. 'Sir, your wife (under pretence of keeping a bawdy-house) is a receiver of stolen-goods.' One evening when he and Mr Burke, and Mr. Langton were in company together, and the admirable scolding of Timon of Athens was mentioned, this instance of Johnson's was quoted, and thought to have at least equal excellence.

"As Johnson always allowed the extraordinary talents of Mr. Burke, so Mr. Burke was fully sensible of the wonderful powers of Johnson. Mr Langton recollects having passed an evening with both of them, when Mr Burke repeatedly entered upon topics which it was evident he would have illustrated with extensive knowledge and richness of expression, but Johnson always seized upon the conversation, in which, however, he acquitted himself in a most masterly manner. As Mr. Burke and Mr Langton were walking home, Mr Burke observed that Johnson had been very great that night, Mr Langton joined in this, but added, he could have wished to hear more from another person, (plainly intimating that he meant Mr Burke) 'O, no (said Mr Burke) it is enough for me to have rung the bell to him.'"

"Talking of Dr Blagden's copiousness and precision of communication, Dr Johnson said, 'Blagden, Sir, is a delightful fellow.'"

* I am sorry to see in the "Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh," Vol II "An Essay on the Character of Hamlet," written, I should suppose, by a very young man, though called "Reverend," who speaks with presumptuous petulance of the first literary character of his age. Amidst a cloudy confusion of words, (which hath of late too often passed in Scotland for *Metaphysics*;) he thus ventures to criticise one of the noblest lines in our language—"Dr Johnson has remarked, that 'time toil'd after him in vain.' But I should apprehend, that this is entirely to mistake the character. Time toils after every great man, as well as after Shakespeare. The workings of an ordinary mind keep pace, indeed, with time, they move no faster, they have their beginning, their middle, and their end, but superior natures can reduce these into a point. They do not, indeed, suppress them, but they suspend, or they lock them up in the breast." The learned Society, under whose sanction such gabble is ushered into the world, would do well to offer a premium to any one who will discover its meaning.

Second Edition.—Paragraph "Talking of Dr Blagden" is placed after anecdote of Green and Guthrie, p 442

Cor et Ad.—After line 29 read —

This year the Reverend Dr. Franklin having published a translation of "Lucian," inscribed to him the *Demonax* thus :

"To DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON, the *Demonax* of the present age, this piece is inscribed by a sincere admirer of his respectable talents,
"THE TRANSLATOR."

THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS BY MR. LANGTON

"Beauclerk having observed to him of one of their friends, that he was awkward at counting money, 'Why, Sir, said Johnson, I am likewise awkward at counting money. But then, Sir, the reason is plain, I have had very little money to count.'"

"He had an abhorrence of affectation. Talking of old Mr. Langton, of whom he said, 'Sir, you will seldom see such a gentleman, such are his stores of literature, such his knowledge in divinity, and such his exemplary life,' he added, 'and, Sir, he has no grimace, no gesticulation, no bursts of admiration on trivial occasions, he never embraces you with an overacted cordiality.'"

"Being in company with a gentleman who thought fit to maintain Dr. Berkeley's ingenious philosophy, that nothing exists but as perceived by some mind, when the gentleman was going away, Johnson said to him, 'Pray, Sir, don't leave us, for we may perhaps forget to think of you, and then you will cease to exist.'"

"Goldsmith, upon being visited by Johnson one day in the Temple, said to him with a little jealousy of the appearance of his accommodation, 'I shall soon be in better chambers than these.' Johnson at the same time checked him and paid him a handsome compliment, implying that a man of his talent should be above attention to such distinctions,—'Nay, Sir, never mind that *nisi te quæsieris extra*.'"

"At the time when his pension was granted to him, he said, with a noble literary ambition, 'Had this happened twenty years ago, I should have gone to Constantinople to learn Arabick, as Pococke did.'"

"As an instance of the niceness of his taste, though he praised West's translation of Pindar, he pointed out the following passages as faulty, by expressing a circumstance so minute as to detract from the general dignity which should prevail

Down then from thy glittering *naul*,
Take, O muse, thy Dorian lyre "

"When Mr. Vesey was proposed as a member of the LITERARY CLUB, Mr. Burke began by saying, that he was a man of gentle manners. 'Sir,' said Johnson, 'you need say no more. When you have said a man of gentle manners, you have said enough.'"

"The late Mr. Fitzherbert told Mr. Langton, that Johnson said to him, 'Sir, a man has no more right to say an uncivil thing, than to act one, no more right to say a rude thing to another than to knock him down.'"

"My dear friend Dr. Bathurst, (said he with a warmth of approbation) declared, he was glad that his father, who was a West-Indian planter, had left his affairs in total rum, because, having no estate, he was not under the temptation of having slaves."

"Richardson had little conversation, except about his own works, of which Sir Joshua Reynolds said he was always willing to talk, and glad to have them introduced. Johnson, when he carried Mr. Langton to see him, professed that he could bring him out into conversation, and used this allusive expression, 'Sir, I can make him *rear*.' But he failed, for in that interview Richardson said little else than that there lay in the room a translation of his *Clarissa* into German."

"A literary lady has favoured me with a characterstick anecdote of Richardson. One day at his country house at Northend, where a large company was assembled at dinner, a gentleman who was just returned from Paris, willing to please Mr. Richardson, mentioned to him a very flattering circumstance,—that he had seen his *Clarissa* lying on the King's brother's table. Richardson observing that part of the company were engaged in talking to each other, affected then not to attend to it but by and by, when there was a general silence, and he thought that the flattery might be fully

Though upon a particular comparison of Demonax and Johnson there does not seem to be a great deal of similarity between them; this Dedication is a just compliment from the general character

"Once when somebody produced a newspaper in which there was a letter of stupid abuse of Sir Joshua Reynolds, of which Johnson himself came in for a share,— 'Pray, said he, let us have it read aloud from beginning to end,' which being done, he with a ludicrous earnestness, and not directing his look to any particular person, called out, 'Are we alive after all this satire!'"

"He had a strong prejudice against the political character of Secker, one instance of which appeared at Oxford, where he expressed great dissatisfaction at his varying the old established toast, 'Church and King'—The Archbishop of Canterbury, said he (with an affected smooth smiling grimace) drinks, "Constitution in Church and State"—Being asked what difference there was between the two toasts, he said, 'Whv, Sir you may be sure he meant something'—Yet when the life of that prelate, prefixed to his sermons by Dr Porteus and Dr Stinton, his chaplains, first came out he read it with the utmost avidity, and said, 'It is a life well written, and that well deserves to be recorded'"

"Of a certain noble Lord, he said, 'Respect him, you could not, for he had no mind of his own—Love him you could not, for that which you could do with him, every one else could'"

"Of Dr Goldsmith he said, 'No man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had'"

"He told in his lively manner the following literary anecdote—'Green and Guthrie, an Irishman and a Scotchman, undertook a translation of Duhalde's history of China—Green said of Guthrie, that he knew no English, and Guthrie of Green, that he knew no French, and these two undertook to translate Duhalde's history of China. In this translation there was found—"the twenty-sixth day of the new moon"—Now, as the whole age of the moon is but twenty-eight days, the moon, instead of being new, was nearly as old as it could be—The blunder arose from their mistaking the word *neuvième* ninth, for *nouvelle*, or *new*, new'"

"Talking of Dr Blagden's copiousness and precision of communication, Dr Johnson said, 'Blagden, Sir, is a delightful fellow'"

"On occasion of Dr Johnson's publishing his pamphlet of 'The False Alarm,' there came out a very angry answer (by many supposed to be by Mr Wilkes)—Dr Johnson determined on not answering it, but, in conversation with Mr Langton mentioned a particular or two, which if he *had* replied to it, he might perhaps have inserted—In the answer's pamphlet, it had been said with solemnity, 'Do you consider, Sir, that a House of Commons is to the people as a creature is to its Creator'—To this question, said Dr Johnson, I could have replied, that—in the first place—the idea of a CREATOR must be such as that he has a power to unmake or annihilate his creature

"Then it cannot be conceived that a creature can make laws for its CREATOR

"Depend upon it, said he, that if a man *talks* of his misfortunes, there is something in them that is not disagreeable to him, for where there is nothing but pure misery, there never is any recourse to the mention of it—

heard, he addressed himself to the gentleman, "I think, Sir, you were saying something about,"—pausing in a high flutter of expectation—The gentleman provoked at his inordinate vanity, resolved not to indulge it, and with an exquisitely sly air of indifference answered, "A mere trifle, Sir, not worth repeating"—The mortification of Richardson was visible, and he did not speak ten words more the whole day—Dr Johnson was present, and appeared to enjoy it much

Second Edition—Line 42, note on CREATOR—His profound adoration of the GREAT FIRST CAUSE was such as to set him above that "Philosophy and vain deceit," with which men of narrow conceptions have been infected—I have heard him strongly maintain that "what is right is not so from any natural fitness, but because GOD wills it to be right," and it is certainly so, because he has predisposed the relations of things so, as that which he wills must be right—ROSWELL

given by Lucian of the ancient Sage, "*αρις ου αν οίδα γω φιλοσοφων γενομενον*, the best philosopher whom I have ever seen or known."

"A man must be a poor beast, that should *read* no more in quantity than he could *utter* aloud

"Imlac in 'Rasselas,' I spelt with a *c* at the end, because it is *less* like English, which should always have the Saxon *z* added to the *c*"

"Many a man is mad in certain instances, and goes through life without having it perceived,—for example, a madness has seized a person, of supposing himself obliged literally to pray continually, had the madness turned the opposite way, and the person thought it a crime ever to pray, it might not improbably have continued unobserved

"He apprehended that the delineation of *characters* in the end of the first Book of the 'Retreat of the ten thousand' was the first instance of the kind that was known

"Supposing (said he) a wife to be of a studious or argumentative turn, it would be very troublesome for instance,—if a woman should continually dwell upon the subject of the Arian heresy

"No man speaks concerning another, even suppose it be in his praise, if he thinks he does not hear him, exactly as he would, if he thought he was within hearing

"The applause of a single human being is of great consequence" This he said to me with great earnestness of manner, very near the time of his decease, on occasion of having desired me to read a letter addressed to him from some person in the North of England, which when I had done, and he asked me what the contents were, as I thought being particular upon it might fatigue him, it being of great length, I only told him in general that it was highly in his praise,—and then he expressed himself as above

"He mentioned with an air of satisfaction what Baretts had told him, that, meeting, in the course of his studying English, with an excellent paper in the Spectator, one of four that were written by the respectable Dissenting Minister Mr Grove of Taunton, and observing the genius and energy of mind that it exhibits, it greatly quickened his curiosity to visit our country, as he thought if such were the lighter periodical essays of our authors, their productions on more weighty occasions must be wonderful indeed

"He observed once, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, that a beggar in the street will more readily ask alms from a *man*, though there should be no marks of wealth in his appearance, than from even a well-dressed *woman*,^b which he accounted for from the great degree of carefulness as to money, that is to be found in women, saying farther upon it, that, the opportunities in general that they possess of improving their condition are much fewer than men have, and adding, as he looked round the company, which consisted of men only,—there is not one of us who does not think he might be richer, if he would use his endeavour

"He thus characterised an ingenious writer of his acquaintance. 'Sir, he is an enthusiast by rule'

"*He may hold up that shield against all his enemies*,"—was an observation by him on Homer, when referring to his description of the shield of Achilles, made by Mrs Fitzherbert, wife to his friend Mr Fitzherbert of Derbyshire, and respected by Dr Johnson as a very fine one. He had in general a very high opinion of that lady's understanding

"An observation of Bathurst's may be mentioned, which Johnson repeated, appearing to acknowledge it to be well founded, namely, it was somewhat remarkable how seldom, on occasion of coming into the company of any new person, one felt any wish or inclination to see him again"

"I hope the authority of the great Master of our language will stop that curtailing innovation, by which we see *critic*, *public*, &c, frequently written instead of *critick*, *publish*, &c

"Sterne is of a direct contrary opinion See his "Sentimental Journey," Article, "The Mystery" BOSWELL

Additional Correction—Line 44 of notes *Read* thus, "was an observation on Homer (in reference to, &c)"

In 1781 Johnson at last completed his "Lives of the Poets," of which he gives this account. "Sometime in March I finished the 'Lives of the Poets,' which I wrote in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work, and working with vigour and haste."^a In a memorandum previous to this, he says of them. "Written I hope, in such a manner as may tend to the promotion of piety."^b

This is the work which of all Dr. Johnson's writings will perhaps be read most generally, and with most pleasure. Philology and biography were his favourite pursuits, and those who lived most in intimacy with him, heard him upon all occasions, when there was a proper opportunity, take delight in expatiating upon the various merits of the English Poets, upon the niceties of their characters, and the events of their progress through the world which they contributed to illuminate. His mind was so full of that kind of information, and it was so well arranged in his memory, that in performing what he had undertaken in this way, he had little more to do than to put his thoughts upon paper, exhibiting first each Poet's life, and then subjoining a critical examination of his genius and works. But when he began to write, the subject swelled in such a manner, that instead of prefaces to each poet of no more than a few pages as he had originally intended,^c he produced an ample, rich, and most entertaining view of them in every respect. In this he resembled Quintilian, who tells us, that in the composition of his Institutions of Oratory, "*Latius se tamen aperiente materia, plus quàm imponebatur oneris sponte suscepti*." The booksellers justly sensible of the great additional value of the copy-right, presented him with another hundred pounds, over and above two hundred, for which his agreement was to furnish such prefaces as he thought fit.

This was, however, but a small recompence for such a collection of biography, and such principles and illustrations of criticisms as, if digested and arranged in one system by some modern Aristotle or Longinus, might form a code upon that subject such as no other nation can shew. As he was so good as to make me a present of

^a Prayers and Meditations, p. 190.

^b Ibid. 174.

^c His design is thus announced in his *Advertisement*. "The Booksellers having determined to publish a body of English Poetry, I was persuaded to promise them a Preface to the works of each authour, an undertaking, as it was then presented to my mind, not very tedious or difficult."

"My purpose was only to have allotted to every poet an *Advertisement*, like that which we find in the French Miscellanies, containing a few dates, and a general character, but I have been led beyond my intention, I hope by the honest desire of giving useful pleasure."

the greatest part of the original, and indeed only manuscript of this admirable work, I have an opportunity of observing with wonder the correctness with which he rapidly struck off such glowing composition. He may be assimilated to the Lady in Waller, who could impress with "Love at first sight:"

"Some other nymphs with colours faint,
And pencil slow may Cupid paint,
And a weak heart in time destroy;
She has a stamp and prints the boy "

That he, however, had a good deal of trouble and some anxiety in carrying on the work, we see from a series of his notes to Mr. Nichols, the printer,* whose variety of literary inquiry and obliging disposition, rendered him very useful to Johnson Mr Steevens appears, from the papers in my possession, to have supplied him with some anecdotes and quotations, and I observe the fair hand of Mrs. Thrale as one of his copyists of select passages

It is not my intention to dwell upon each of Johnson's "Lives of

* Thus —"In the Life of Waller, Mr Nichols will find a reference to the Parliamentary History, from which a long quotation is to be inserted If Mr Nichols cannot easily find the book, Mr Johnson will send it from Streatham "

"Clarendon is here returned "

"By some accident, I laid *your* note upon Duke up so safely, that I cannot find it Your informations have been of great use to me I must beg it again; with another list of our authours, for I have laid that with the other I have sent Stepeny's Epitaph Let me have the revises as soon as can be Dec 1778 "

"I have sent Philips, with his Epitaphs, to be inserted The fragment of a Preface is hardly worth the impression, but that we may seem to do something It may be added to the Life of Philips The Latin page is to be added to the Life of Smith I shall be at home, to revise the two sheets of Milton March 1, 1779 "

"Please to get me the last edition of Hughes's Letters, and try to get Dennis upon Blackmore, and upon Cato, and anything of the same writer against Pope. Our materials are defective "

"As Waller professed to have imitated Fairfax, do you think a few pages of Fairfax would enrich our edition? Few readers have seen it, and it may please them But it is not necessary "

"An account of the Lives and Works of some of the most eminent English Poets By, &c —'The English Poets, biographically and critically considered, by SAM JOHNSON.'—Let Mr Nichols take his choice, or make another to his mind May, 1781 "

"You somehow forgot the advertisement for the new edition It was not unclosed Of Gay's letters I see not that any use can be made, for they give no information of any thing That he was a member of the Philosophical Society is something, but surely he could be but a corresponding member However, not having his Life here, I know not how to put it in, and it is of little importance "

See several more in "The Gentleman's Magazine," 1785 The Editor of that Miscellany, in which Johnson wrote for several years, seems justly to think that every fragment of so great a man is worthy of being preserved

Cor et Ad —Line 16, after "passages," *read*, "But he was principally indebted to my steady friend Mr Isaac Reed, of Staple-inn, whose extensive and accurate knowledge of English literary History I do not express with exaggeration, when I say it is wonderful, indeed his labours have proved it to the world, and all who have the pleasure of his acquaintance can bear testimony to the frankness of his communications in private society "

the Poets," or attempt an analysis of their merits, which were I able to do it, would take up too much room in this work, yet I shall make a few observations upon some of them, and insert a few various readings¹

The Life of COWLEY he himself considered as the best of the whole, on account of the dissertation which it contains on the *Metaphysical Poets* Dryden, whose critical abilities were equal to his poetical, had mentioned them in one of his excellent prefatory discourses to his Plays, but had barely mentioned them. Johnson has exhibited them at large, with such happy illustration from their writings, and in so luminous a manner, that indeed he may be allowed the full merit of novelty, to have discovered to us as it were, a new planet in the poetical hemisphere

It is remarked by Johnson, in considering the works of a poet,* that "amendments are seldom made without some token of a rent," but I do not find that this is applicable to prose. We shall see that though his amendments in this work are for the better, there is nothing of the *pannus assutus*, the texture is uniform, and indeed what has been there at first, is very seldom unfit to have remained

Various readings^b in the Life of COWLEY

"All [future votaries of] *that may hereafter pant for solitude*

"To conceive and execute the [agitation or perception] *pains and the pleasures* of other minds

"The wide effulgence of [the blazing] *a summer noon*."

In the Life of WALLER, Johnson gives a distinct and animated narrative of publick affairs in that variegated period, with strong yet nice touches of character, and having a fair opportunity to display his political principles, does it with an unqualified manly confidence, and satisfies his readers how nobly he might have executed a *Tory history* of his country.

Cor et Ad—Line 8 *Dele* "one of," and for "prefatory discourses to his plays" read "dedication of his Juvenal"

Erratum—Line 8 *For* "one of his excellent prefatory discourses to his Plays," read "his excellent dedication of his 'Juvenal,'" and line 12, after "novelty," insert "and"

^a Life of Sheffield

^b The original reading is inclosed in brackets, and the present one is printed in Italicks

¹ A caricature of Johnson appeared, which represented him as an owl perched on his "Lives of the Poets," and blunk-
ing at Milton and the other poets, who were in a blaze of light

So easy is his style in these Lives, that I do not recollect more than three uncommon or learned words, one, when giving an account of the approach of Waller's mortal disease, he says, "he found his legs grow *tumid*;" by using the expression his legs *swelled*, he would have avoided this, and there would have been no impropriety in its being followed by the interesting question to his physician, "What that *swelling* meant?" Another, when he mentions that Pope had *emitted* proposals, when *published* or *issued*, would have been more readily understood, and a third, when he calls Orrery and Dr. Delany, writers both undoubtedly *veracious*; when *true*, *honest*, or *faithful*, might have been used. Yet, it must be owned, that none of these are *hard* or *too big* words, that custom would make them seem as easy as any others, and that a language is richer and capable of more beauty of expression, by having a greater variety of synonymes.

His dissertation upon the unfitness of poetry for the awful subjects of our holy religion, though I do not entirely agree with him, has all the merit of originality, with uncommon force of reasoning.

Various readings in the Life of WALLER.

"Consented to [the insertion of their names] *their own nomination*

"[After] *paying* a fine of ten thousand pounds.

"Congratulating Charles the Second on his [coronation] *recovered right*.

"He that has flattery ready for all whom the vicissitudes of the world happen to exalt, must be [confessed to degrade his powers] *scorned as a prostituted mind*

"The characters by which Waller intended to distinguish his writings are [elegance] *sprightliness* and dignity.

"Blossoms to be valued only as they [fetch] *foretell* fruits.

"Images such as the superficies of nature [easily] *readily* supplies.

"[His] *Some* applications [are sometimes] *may be thought too* remote and un consequential

"His images are [sometimes confused] *not always distinct*."

Against his Life of MILTON, the hounds of Whiggism have opened in full cry. But of Milton's great excellence as a poet, where shall we find such a blazon as by the hand of Johnson? I shall select only the following passage concerning "*Paradise Lost*:"

"Fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton

surveyed the silent progress of his work, and marked his reputation stealing its way in a kind of subterraneous current, through fear and silence. I cannot but conceive him calm and confident, little disappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with steady consciousness, and waiting without impatience, the vicissitudes of opinion, and the impartiality of a future generation."

Indeed, even Dr Towers, who may be considered as one of the warmest zealots of *The Revolution Society* itself, allows, that "Johnson has spoken in the highest terms of the abilities of that great poet, and has bestowed on his principal poetical compositions, the most honourable encomiums."^a

That a man, who venerated the Church and Monarchy as Johnson did, should speak with a just abhorrence of Milton as a politician, or rather as a daring foe to good polity, was surely to be expected, and to those who censure him, I would recommend his commentary on Milton's celebrated complaint of his situation, when by the lenity of Charles the Second, "A lenity of which (as Johnson well observes) the world has had perhaps no other example, he, who had written in justification of the murder of his Sovereign, was safe under an *Act of Oblivion*" No sooner is he safe than he finds himself in danger, *fallen on evil days and evil tongues, and with darkness and with danger compass'd round* This darkness, had his eyes been better employed, had undoubtedly deserved compassion; but to add the mention of danger was ungrateful and unjust. He was fallen, indeed, on *evil days*, the time was come in which regicides could no longer boast their wickedness But of *evil tongues* to complain, required impudence at least equal to his other powers. Milton, whose warmest advocates must allow, "that he never spared any aspect of reproach, or brutality of insolence."

^a See "An Essay on the Life, Character, and Writings of Dr Samuel Johnson," London, 1787, which is very well written, making a proper allowance for the democratical bigotry of its author, who I cannot however but admire for his liberality in speaking thus of my illustrious friend

"He possessed extraordinary powers of understanding, which were much cultivated by study, and still more by meditation and reflection His memory was remarkably retentive, his imagination uncommonly vigorous, and his judgement keen and penetrating He had a strong sense of the importance of religion, his piety was sincere, and sometimes ardent, and his zeal for the interests of virtue was often manifested in his conversation and in his writings The same energy which was displayed in his literary productions was exhibited also in his conversation, which was various, striking, and instructive, and perhaps no man ever equalled him for nervous and pointed repartees

"His Dictionary, his moral Essays, and his productions in polite literature, will convey useful instruction, and elegant entertainment, as long as the language in which they are written shall be understood"

Cor et Ad—Line 26 After "tongues," read "for Milton."

Ibid—Line 3 of note For "who" read "whom"

I have, indeed, often wondered how Milton, "an acrimonious and surly Republican," a man "who in his domestick relations was so severe and arbitrary," and whose head was filled with the hardest and most dismal tenets of Calvinism, should have been such a poet; should not only have written with sublimity, but with beauty, and even gayety; should have exquisitely painted the sweetest sensations of which our nature is capable, imaged the delicate raptures of connubial love, nay, seemed to be animated with all the spirit of revelry. It is a proof that in the human mind the departments of judgement and imagination, perception and temper, may sometimes be divided by strong partitions, and that the light and shade in the same character may be kept so distinct as never to be blended.

In the Life of Milton, Johnson took occasion to maintain his own and the general opinion of the excellence of rhyme over blank verse, in English poetry, and quotes this apposite illustration of it by "an ingenious critick," that *it seems to be verse only to the eye.** The gentleman whom he thus characterises is (as he told Mr. Seward) Mr. Lock, of Norbury Park, in Surrey, whose knowledge and taste in the fine arts is universally celebrated; with whose elegance of manners the writer of the present work has felt himself much impressed, and to whose virtues a common friend, who has known him long, and is not much addicted to flattery, gives the highest testimony.

Various readings in the Life of MILTON.

"I cannot find any meaning but this which [his most bigotted advocates] *even kindness and reverence* can give.

"[Perhaps no] *scarcely any* man ever wrote so much, and praised so few.

"A certain [rescue] *preservative* from oblivion

"Let me not be censured for this digression, as [contracted] *pedantick* or paradoxical.

* One of the most natural instances of the effect of blank verse happened to the late Earl of Hopeton. His Lordship observed one of his shepherds poring in the fields upon Milton's "*Paradise Lost*," and, having asked him what book it was, the man answered, "An't please your Lordship, this is a very odd sort of an authour. he would fain rhyme, but cannot get at it."

Third Edition—Line 2, note "Johnson's Life of Milton,"¹

Cor et Ad—Line 13 On "blended," put the following note—"Mr Malone thinks it is rather a proof that he felt nothing of these cheerful sensations which he has described 'that on these topics it is the poet, and not the man, that writes.'"

¹ It is impossible to say whether this, first and second editions, belongs to with other corrections not found in the Malone's or Boswell's notes

"Socrates rather was of opinion, that what we had to learn was how to [obtain and communicate happiness] *do good and avoid evil.*

"Its elegance [who can exhibit?] *is less attainable.*"

I could, with pleasure, expatiate upon the masterly execution of the *Life of DRYDEN*, which we have seen^a was one of Johnson's literary projects at an early period, and which it is remarkable, that after desisting from it, from a supposed scantiness of materials, he should, at an advanced age, have performed so amply.

His defence of that great poet against the illiberal attacks upon him, as if his embracing the Roman Catholick communion had been a time-serving measure, is a piece of reasoning at once able and candid. Indeed, Dryden himself, in his "*Hind and Panther*," hath given such a picture of his mind, that they who know the anxiety for repose as to the awful subject of our state beyond the grave, though they may think his opinion ill-founded, must think charitably of his sentiment.

"But, gracious God, how well dost thou provide
For erring judgements an unerring guide!
Thy throne is darkness in th' abyss of light,
A blaze of glory that forbids the sight.
O! teach me to believe thee thus conceal'd,
And search no farther than thyself reveal'd;
But Her alone for my director take,
Whom thou hast promis'd never to forsake,
My thoughtless youth was wing'd with vain desires;
My manhood, long misled by wand'ring fires,
Follow'd false lights, and when their glimpse was gone,
My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
Such was I, such by Nature still I am,
Be thine the glory, and be mine the shame.
Good life be now my task. my doubts are done;
What more could shock my faith than Three in One?"

In drawing Dryden's character, Johnson has given, though I suppose unintentionally, some touches of his own. Thus, "The power that predominated in his intellectual operations was rather strong reason than quick sensibility. Upon all occasions that were presented, he studied rather than felt, and produced sentiments not such as Nature enforces, but meditation supplies. With the simple and elemental passions as they spring separate

^a See page 146 of this Volume.

in the mind, he seems not much acquainted. He is, therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetick, and had so little sensibility of the power of effusions purely natural, that he did not esteem them in others"—It may indeed be observed, that in all the numerous writings of Johnson, whether in prose or verse, and even in his tragedy, of which the subject is the distress of an unfortunate Princess, there is not a single passage that ever drew a tear.

Various readings in the Life of DRYDEN

"The reason of this general perusal, Addison has attempted to [find in] *derive from* the delight which the mind feels in the investigation of secrets

"His best actions are but [convenient] *inability of* wickedness.

"When once he had engaged himself in disputation, [matter] *thoughts* flowed in on either side

"The abyss of un-ideal [emptiness] *vacancy*.

"These, like [many other harlots,] *the harlots of other men*, had his love though not his approbation

"He [sometimes displays] *descends to display* his knowledge with pedantick ostentation.

"French words which [were then used in] *had then crept into* conversation."

The Life of POPE was written by Johnson *con amore*, both from the early possession which that writer had taken of his mind, and from the pleasure which he must have felt, in for ever silencing all attempts to lessen his poetical fame, by demonstrating his excellence, and pronouncing, a triumphant apotheosis—"After all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, Whether Pope was a poet? otherwise than by asking in return, If Pope be not a poet where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition, will only shew the narrowness of the definer, though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past, let [us] enquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed."

I remember once to have heard Johnson say, "Sir, a thousand

Cor et Ad—Line 28 For "apotheosis" read "eulogium."

years may elapse before there shall appear another man with a power of versification equal to that of Pope. That power must undoubtedly be allowed its due share in enhancing the value of his captivating composition."

Johnson, who had done liberal justice to Warburton in his edition of Shakspeare, which was published during the life of that powerful writer, with still greater liberality took an opportunity of paying the tribute due to him when he was no longer in "high place," but numbered with the dead.*

It seems strange, that two such men as Johnson and Warburton,

* Of Johnson's conduct towards Warburton, a very honourable notice is taken by the editor of "Tracts by Warburton, and a Warburtonian, not admitted into the Collection of their respective Works." After an able and "fond, though not undistinguishing," consideration of Warburton's character, he says, "In two immortal works, Johnson has stood forth in the foremost rank of his admirers. By the testimony of such a man, impertinence must be abashed, and malignity itself must be softened. Of literary merit, Johnson, as we all know, was a sagacious but a most severe judge. Such was his discernment, that he pierced into the most secret Springs of human actions, and such was his integrity, that he always weighed the moral characters of his fellow-creatures in the 'balance of the sanctuary.' He was too courageous to propitiate a rival, and too proud to truckle to a superior. Warburton he knew, as I know him, and as every man of sense and virtue would wish to be known—I mean, both from his own writings, and from the writings of those who dissented from his principles, or who envied his reputation. But, as to favours, he had never received or asked any from the Bishop of Gloucester, and, if my memory fails me not, he had seen him only once, when they met almost without design, conversed without much effort, and parted without any lasting impressions of hatred or affection. Yet, with all the ardour of sympathetick genius, Johnson has done that spontaneously and ably, which by some writers, had been before attempted injudiciously, and which, by others, from whom more successful attempts might have been expected, has not *hitherto* been done at all. He spoke well of Warburton, without insulting those whom Warburton despised. He suppressed not the imperfections of this extraordinary man, while he endeavoured to do justice to his numerous and transcendental excellencies. He defended him when living, amidst the clamours of his enemies, and praised him when dead, amidst the *silence of his friends*."

Having availed myself of this editor's eulogy on my departed friend, for which I warmly thank him, let me not suffer the lustre of his reputation, honestly acquired by profound learning and vigorous eloquence, to be tarnished by a charge of illiberality. He has been accused of invidiously dragging again into light certain writings of a person respectable by his talents, his learning, his station, and his age, which were published a great many years ago, and have since, it is said, been silently given up by their author. But when it is considered that these writings were not *sins of youth*, but deliberate works of one well advanced in life, overflowing at once with flattery to a great man of great interest in the Church, and with unjust and acrimonious abuse of two men of eminent merit, and that, though it would have been unreasonable to expect an humiliating recantation, no apology whatever has been made in the cool of the evening, for the oppressive fervour of the heat of the day, no slight relenting indication has appeared in any note, or any corner of later publications, is it not fair to understand him as superciliously persevering? When he allows the shafts to remain in the wounds, and will not stretch forth a lenient hand, is it wrong, is it not generous to become an indignant avenger?

Erratum—Line 2. After "Pope" insert inverted commas, and *delete* them, line after "imposition"!

¹ Here, it will be seen, a fresh correction is necessary, the word being "composition."

who lived in the same age and country, should not only not have been in any degree of intimacy, but been almost personally unacquainted. But such instances, though we must wonder at them, are not rare. If I am rightly informed, after a careful inquiry, they never met but once, which was at the house of Mrs French, in London, well known for her elegant assemblies, and bringing eminent characters together. The interview proved to be mutually agreeable.

I am well informed, that Warburton said of Johnson, "I admire him, but I cannot bear his style" and that Johnson being told of this, said, "That is exactly my case as to him." The manner in which he expressed his admiration of the fertility of Warburton's genius and of the variety of his materials, was, "The table is always full, Sir. He brings things from the north, and the south, and from every quarter. In his 'Divine Legation,' you are always entertained. He carries you round and round, without carrying you forward to the point, but then you have no wish to be carried forward." He said to the Reverend Mr Strahan, "Warburton is perhaps the last man who has written with a mind full of reading and reflection."

It is remarkable, that in the Life of Broome, Johnson takes notice of Dr Warburton's using a mode of expression which he himself used, and that not seldom, to the great offence of those who did not know him. Having occasion to mention a note, stating the different parts which were executed by the associated translators of "The Odyssey," he says, "Dr Warburton told me, in his warm language, that he thought the relation given in the note *a lie*." The language is *warm* indeed, and, I must own, cannot be justified in consistency with a decent regard to the established forms of speech. Johnson had accustomed himself to use the word *lie*, to express a mistake or an error in relation, in short, when the thing *was not so as told*, though the relator did not *mean* to deceive. When he thought there was intentional falsehood in the relator, his expression was, "He *lies*, and he *knows* he *lies*."

Speaking of Pope's not having been known to excel in conversation, Johnson observes, that "traditional memory retains no sallies of raillery, or sentences of observation, nothing either pointed or solid, wise or merry; and that one apophthegm only is recorded." In this respect, Pope differed widely from Johnson, whose conversation was, perhaps, more admirable than even his writings, however excellent. Mr. Wilkes has, however, favoured me with one repartee of Pope, of which Johnson was not informed. Johnson, after justly censuring him for having "nursed in his mind a foolish dis-esteem of Kings," tells us, "yet a little regard shown him by the Prince of

Wales melted his obduracy, and he had not much to say when he was asked by his Royal Highness, *how he could love a Prince, while he disliked Kings?*" The answer which Pope made, was, "The young lion is harmless, and even playful, but when his claws are full grown he becomes cruel, dreadful, and mischievous."

But although we have no collection of Pope's sayings, it is not therefore to be concluded, that he was not agreeable in social intercourse, for Johnson himself has been heard to say, that "the happiest conversation is that of which nothing is distinctly remembered but a general effect of pleasing impression." The late Lord Somerville,* who saw much both of great and brilliant life, told me, that he had dined in company with Pope, and that after dinner the *little man*, as he called him, drank his bottle of Burgundy, and was exceedingly gay and entertaining.

I cannot withhold from my great friend a censure of at least culpable inattention, to a nobleman, who, it has been shewn, behaved to him with uncommon politeness. He says, "Except Lord Bathurst, none of Pope's noble friends were such as that a good man would wish to have his intimacy with them known to posterity." This will not apply to Lord Mansfield, who was not ennobled in Pope's life time, but Johnson should have recollected, that Lord Marchmont was one of those noble friends. He includes his Lordship along with Lord Bolingbroke, in a charge of neglect of the papers which Pope left by his will, when, in truth, as I myself pointed out to him, before he wrote that poet's life, the papers were "committed to the sole care and judgement of Lord Bolingbroke, unless he (Lord Bolingbroke) shall not survive me," so that Lord Marchmont had no concern whatever with them. After the first edition of the Lives, Mr. Malone, whose love of justice is equal to his accuracy, made, in my hearing, the same remark to Johnson, yet he omitted to correct the erroneous statement. These par-

* Let me here express my grateful remembrance of Lord Somerville's kindness to me, at a very early period. He was the first person of high rank that took particular notice of me in the way most flattering to a young man, fondly ambitious of being distinguished for his literary talents, and by the honour of his encouragement made me think well of myself, and aspire to deserve it better. He had a happy art of communicating his varied knowledge of the world, in short remarks and anecdotes, with a quiet pleasant gravity, that was exceedingly engaging. Never shall I forget the hours which I enjoyed with him at his apartments in the Royal Palace of Holy-Rood House, and at his seat near Edinburgh, which he himself had formed with an elegant taste.¹

¹ Mr. Boswell, when a mere youth, contrived to attach to him persons who were his superiors in age and rank. When a member of the Select Society, he was always, he tells us, the friend of those con-

siderably his superiors in age, of Elibank, Kaimes, Dalrymple, &c. Lord Eglinton insisted that he should occupy an apartment in his house—*Memoir, Europ. Mag.*

ticulars I mention, in the belief that there was only forgetfulness in my friend, but I owe this much to the Earl of Marchmont's reputation, who, were there no other memorials, will be immortalised by that line of Pope, in the verses on his Grotto:

"And the bright flame was shot through Marchmont's soul"

Various readings in the Life of POPE.

"[Somewhat free] *sufficiently bold* in his criticisms.

"All the gay [niceties] *varieties* of diction.

"Strikes the imagination with far [more] *greater* force.

"It is [probably] *certainly* the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen.

"Every sheet enabled him to write the next with [less trouble] *more facility*.

"No man sympathizes with [vanity depressed] *the sorrows of vanity*.

"It had been [criminal] *less easily excused*

"When he [threatened to lay down] *talked of laying down* his pen

"Society [is so named emphatically in opposition to] *politically regulated, is a state contra-distinguished from* a state of nature.

"A fictitious life of an [absurd] *infatuated* scholar.

"A foolish [contempt, disregard,] *disesteem* of Kings.

"His hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows [were like those of other mortals] *acted strongly upon his mind*

"Eager to pursue knowledge and attentive to [accumulate] *retain it*.

"A mind [excursive] *active*, ambitious, and adventurous.

"In its [noblest] *widest* searches still longing to go forward.

"He wrote in such a manner as might expose him to few [neglects] *hazards*

"The [reasonableness] *justice* of my determination.

"A [favourite] *delicious* employment of the poets.

"More terrifick and more powerful [beings] *phantoms* perform on the stormy ocean

"The inventor of [those] *this* petty [beings] *nation*.

"The [mind] *heart* naturally loves truth."¹

¹ In the "Curiosities of Literature" is given a paper of Johnson's, containing notes and topics to be treated in the life

In the Life of ADDISON we find an unpleasing account of his having lent Steele a hundred pounds, and "reclaimed his loan by an execution" In the new edition of the *Biographia Britannica*, the authenticity of this anecdote is denied But Mr. Malone has obliged me with the following note concerning it :

"Many persons having doubts concerning this fact, I applied to Dr Johnson to learn on what authority he asserted it. He told me, he had it from Savage, who lived in intimacy with Steele, and who informed him, that Steele told him the story with tears in his eyes — Ben Victor, Dr. Johnson said, likewise informed him of this remarkable transaction, from the relation of Mr Wilkes the comedian, who was also an intimate of Steele's — Some, in defence of Addison, have said, that 'the act was done with the good-natured view of rousing Steele, and correcting that profusion which always made him necessitous.' — 'If that were the case, (said Johnson,) and that he only wanted to alarm Steele, he would afterwards have returned the money to his friend, which it is not pretended he did' — 'This, too, (he added,) might be retorted by an advocate for Steele, who might alledge, that he did not repay the loan *intentionally*, merely to see whether Addison would be mean and ungenerous enough to make use of legal process to recover it. But of such speculations there is no end — we cannot dive into the hearts of men, but their actions are open to observation'

"I then mentioned to him that some people thought that Mr. Addison's character was so pure, that the fact, *though true*, ought to have been suppressed He saw no reason for this. 'If nothing but the bright side of characters should be shewn, we should sit down in despondency, and think it utterly impossible to imitate them in *any thing* The sacred writers (he observed) related the vicious as well as the virtuous actions of men, which had this moral effect, that it kept mankind from *despair*, into which otherwise they would naturally fall, were they not supported by the recollection that others had offended like themselves, and by penitence and amendment of life had been restored to the favour of Heaven.'

"E. M.

"March 15, 1782"

The last paragraph of this note is of great importance; and I request that my readers may consider it with particular attention. It will be afterwards referred to in this work.

Various readings in the Life of ADDISON.

"[But he was our first great example] *He was, however, one of our earliest examples of correctness.*

"And [overlook] *despise* their masters.

"His instructions were such as the [state] *character* of his [own time] *readers* made [necessary] *proper.*

"His purpose was to [diffuse] *infuse* literary curiosity by gentle and unsuspected conveyance [among] *into* the gay, the idle, and the wealthy.

"Framed rather for those that [wish] *are learning* to write.

"Domestick [manners] *scenes.*"

In his Life of PARNELL, I wonder that Johnson omitted to insert an Epitaph which he had long before composed for that amiable man, without ever writing it down, but which he was so good as, at my request, to dictate me, by which means it has been preserved.

"*Hic requiescit THOMAS PARNELL, S. T. P.*

"*Qui sacerdos pariter et Poeta,
Utrasque partes ita implevit,
Ut neque sacerdoti suavis poetæ,
Nec poetæ sacerdotis sanctitas deesset.*"

Various readings in the Life of PARNELL.

"About three years [after] *afterwards.*

"[Did not much want] *was in no great need of* improvement.

"But his prosperity *did not last long* [was clouded by that which took away all his powers of enjoying either profit or pleasure, the death of his wife, whom he is said to have lamented with such sorrow, as hastened his end"] His end, whatever was the cause, was now approaching.

"In the Hermit, the [composition] *narrative*, as it is less airy, is less pleasing "

In the Life of BLACKMORE, we find that writer's reputation generously cleared by Johnson, from the cloud of prejudice which the malignity of contemporary wits had raised around it. In this spirited exertion of justice, he has been imitated by Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his praise of the architecture of Vanburgh.

* I should have thought that Johnson, who had felt the severe affliction from which Parnell never recovered, would have preserved this passage

We trace Johnson's own character in his observation on Blackmore's "magnanimity as an authour'—"The incessant attacks of his enemies, whether serious or merry, are never discovered to have disturbed his quiet, or to have lessened his confidence in himself." Johnson, I recollect, once told me, laughing heartily, that he understood it had been said of him, "He *appears* not to feel; but, when he is *alone*, depend upon it, he *suffers sadly*." I am as certain as I can be of any man's real sentiments, that he *enjoyed* the perpetual shower of little hostile arrows, as evidences of his fame.

Various readings in the Life of BLACKMORE.

"To [set] *engage* poetry [on the side] *in the cause* of virtue.

"He likewise [established] *enforced* the truth of Revelation.

"[Kindness] *benevolence* was ashamed to favour

"His practice, which was once [very extensive] *invidiously great*

"There is scarcely any distemper of dreadful name [of] which he has not [shewn] *taught his reader* how [it is] *to* [be opposed] *oppose*.

"Of this [contemptuous] *indecent* arrogance.

"[He wrote] *but produced* likewise a work of a different kind.

"At least [written] *compiled* with integrity.

"Faults which many tongues [were desirous] *would have made haste* to publish

"But though he [had not] *could not boast of* much critical knowledge

"He [used] *wasted for* no felicities of fancy.

"Or had ever elevated his [mind] *views* to that ideal perfection which every [mind] *genius* born to excel is condemned always to pursue and never overtake.

"The [first great] *fundamental* principle of wisdom and of virtue."

Various readings in the Life of PHILIPS.

"His dreaded [rival] *antagonist* Pope.

"They [have not often much] *are not loaded with* thought.

"In his translations from Pindar, he [will not be denied to have reached] *found the art of reaching* all the obscurity of the Theban bard."

Various readings in the Life of CONGREVE

"Congreve's conversation must surely have been *at least* equally pleasing with his writings.

"It apparently [requires] *pre-supposes* a familiar knowledge of male characters.

"Reciprocation of [similar] *conceits*.

"The dialogue is quick and [various] *sparkling*

"Love for Love, a comedy [more drawn from life] *of nearer alliance to life*

"The general character of his miscellanies is, that they shew little wit and [no] *little* virtue

"[Perhaps] *certainly* he had not the fire requisite for the higher species of lyric poetry."

Various readings in the Life of TICKELL.

"[Longed] *long wished* to peruse it

"At the [accession] *arrival* of King Georg

"Fiction [unnaturally] *unskilfully* compounded of Grecian deities and Gothick faines "

Various readings in the Life of AKENSIDE

"For [another] *a different* purpose.

"[A furious] *an unnecessary* and outrageous zeal.

"[Something which] *what* he called and thought liberty.

"A [favourer of innovation] *lover of contradiction*.

"Warburton's [censure] *objections*.

"His rage [for liberty] *of patriotism*.

"Mr Dyson with [a zeal] *an ardour* of friendship "

In the Life of LYTTELTON, Johnson seems to have been not favourably disposed towards that nobleman Mrs. Thrale suggests¹ that he was offended by *Molly Aston's* preference of his Lordship

¹ "I never said so," writes Mrs Piozzi opposite this passage. "I believe Lord Lyttelton and Molly Aston were not acquainted. No, no, it was Miss Boothby, whose preference he professed to have been jealous of, and so I said in the Anecdotes." Mr Malone also pointed out this mistake. Mr Croker dismisses as absurd the idea that Johnson in his youth could have been an admirer of Miss

Boothby's, insisting that he became acquainted with her only a few years before his death. But as evidence to the contrary, we have the letter of Boswell's Lichfield lady correspondent, p. 42, a statement of Miss Seward's, and finally, Johnson's ardent and affectionate letters, which have all the air of long friendship.

to him * I can by no means join the censure bestowed by Johnson on his Lordship, whom he calls "poor Lyttelton,"¹ for returning thanks to the Critical Reviewers, for having "kindly commended" his "*Dialogues of the Dead*" Such "acknowledgements (says my friend) never can be proper, since they must be paid either for flattery or for justice." In my opinion, the most upright man, who has been tried on a false accusation, may, when he is acquitted, make a bow to his jury. And when those who, no matter by what right, are so much the arbiters of literary merit, as in a considerable degree to influence the publick opinion, review an authour's work, *placido lumine*, when I am afraid mankind in general are better pleased with severity, he may surely express a grateful sense of their civility.

Various readings in the Life of LYTTTELTON

"He solaced [himself] *his grief* by writing a long poem to her memory

"The production rather [of a mind that means well than thinks vigorously] *as it seems of leisure than of study, rather effusions than compositions.*

"His last literary [work] *production*

"[Found the way] *undertook* to persuade "

As the introduction to his critical examination of the genius and writings of YOUNG, he did Mr Herbert Croft, then a Barrister of

* Let not my readers smile to think of Johnson's being a candidate for female favour, Mr Peter Garrick assured me, that he was told by a lady, that in her opinion Johnson was "a very *seducing man*" Disadvantages of person and manner may be forgotten, where intellectual pleasure is communicated to a susceptible mind, and that Johnson was capable of feeling the most delicate and disinterested attachment, appears from the following letter, which is published by Mrs Thrale, with some others to the same person, of which the excellence is not so apparent

To Miss BOOTHBY

"January, 1755

"DEAREST MADAM,—Though I am afraid your illness leaves you little leisure for the reception of airy civilities, yet I cannot forbear to pay you my congratulations on the new year, and to declare my wishes that your years to come may be many and happy In this wish, indeed, I include myself, who have none but you on whom my heart reposes, yet surely I wish your good, even though your situation were such as should permit you to communicate no gratifications to, dearest, dearest Madam,

"Your, &c

"SAM JOHNSON,"

¹ Johnson applied by letter to Lord Westcote to furnish a life of his brother Lord Lyttelton, adding that he would not either "wantonly or willingly offend" The other declined, also by letter Yet Mrs Piozzi declares (*Marginalia*) that

she was present when the request was made, and that she heard Lord Westcote decline with many complimentary expressions. She had probably heard the story from Johnson.

Lincoln's-inn, now a clergyman, the honour to adopt a Life of Young written by that gentleman, who was the friend of Dr. Young's son, and wished to vindicate him from some very mistaken remarks to his prejudice. Mr Croft's performance was subjected to the revision of Dr Johnson, as appears from the following note to Mr John Nichols.

"This Life of Dr. Young was written by a friend of his son. What is crossed with black is expunged by the authour, what is crossed with red is expunged by me. If you find any thing more than can be well omitted, I shall not be sorry to see it yet shorter."

It has always appeared to me to have a considerable share of merit, and to display a pretty successful imitation of Johnson's style. When I mentioned this to a very eminent literary character, he opposed me vehemently, exclaiming, "No, no, it is *not* a good imitation of Johnson, it has all his pomp without his force, it has all the nodosities of the oak without its strength." This was an image so happy, that one might have thought he would have been satisfied with it, but he was not. And setting his mind again to work, he added, with exquisite felicity, "It has all the contortions of the Sybil, without the inspiration."

Mr. Croft very properly guards us against supposing that Young was a gloomy man, and mentions, that "his parish was indebted to the good-humour of the authour of the '*Night Thoughts*' for an Assembly and a Bowling-Green." A letter from a noble foreigner is quoted, in which he is said to have been "very pleasant in conversation."

Mr Langton, who frequently visited him, informs me, that there was an air of benevolence in his manner, but that he could obtain from him less information than he had hoped to receive from one who had lived so much in intercourse with the brightest men of what has been called the Augustan age of England; and that he shewed a degree of eager curiosity concerning the common occurrences that were then passing, which appeared somewhat remarkable in a man of such intellectual stores, of such an advanced age, and who had retired from life with declared disappointment in his expectations.

An instance at once of his pensive turn of mind, and his cheerfulness of temper, appeared in a little story which he himself told to Mr. Langton, when they were walking in his garden. "Here (said he) I had put a handsome sun-dial, with this inscription,

Eheu fugaces ! which (speaking with a smile) was sadly verified, for by the next morning my dial had been carried off."

It gives me much pleasure to observe, that however Johnson may have casually talked, yet when he sits, as "an ardent judge zealous to his trust, giving sentence," upon the excellent works of Young, he allows them the high praise to which they are justly entitled. "The *Universal Passion* (says he) is indeed a very great performance,—his distichs have the weight of solid sentiment, and his points the sharpness of resistless truth "

But I was most anxious concerning Johnson's decision upon "*Night Thoughts*," which I esteem as a mass of the grandest and richest poetry that human genius has ever produced, and was delighted to find this character of that work. "In his '*Night Thoughts*' he has exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflections and striking allusions, a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every odour. This is one of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhyme but with disadvantage." And afterwards, "Particular lines are not to be regarded, the power is in the whole, and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to Chinese plantation, the magnificence of vast extent and endless diversity "

But there is in this Poem not only all that Johnson so well brings in view, but a power of the *Pathetick* beyond almost any example that I have seen. He who does not feel his nerves shaken, and his heart pierced by many passages in this extraordinary work, particularly by that most affecting one, which describes the gradual torment suffered by the contemplation of an object of affectionate attachment, visibly and certainly decaying into dissolution, must be of a hard and obstinate frame

To all the other excellencies of "*Night Thoughts*," let me add the great and peculiar one, that they contain not only the noblest sentiments of virtue, and the immortality of the soul, but the *Christian Sacrifice*, the *Divine Propitiation*, with all its interesting circumstances, and consolations to "a wounded spirit," so solemnly and poetically displayed in such imagery and language, as cannot fail to exalt, animate, and soothe the truly pious. No book what ever can be recommended to young persons, with better hopes of

Cir et Ad—Line 2. On "off" put the following note—"The Late Mr James Ralph told Lord Macartney, that he passed an evening with Dr Young at Lord Melcombe's (then Mr Doddington) at Hammersmith. The Doctor happening to go out into the garden, Mr Doddington observed to him, on his return, that it was a dreadful night, as in truth it was, there being a violent storm of rain and wind. 'No, Sir, (replied the Doctor) it is a very fine night. THE LORD is abroad.'"

seasoning their minds with *vital religion* than YOUNG'S "NIGHT THOUGHTS."

In the Life of SWIFT, it appears to me that Johnson had a certain degree of prejudice against that extraordinary man, of which I have elsewhere had occasion to speak. Mr. Thomas Sheridan imputed it to a supposed apprehension in Johnson, that Swift had not been sufficiently active in obtaining for him an Irish degree when it was solicited,* but of this there was not sufficient evidence, and let me not presume to charge Johnson with injustice, because he did not think so highly of the writings of this authour, as I have done from my youth upwards. Yet that he had an unfavourable bias is evident, were it only from that passage in which he speaks of Swift's practice of saving, as, "first ridiculous and at last detestable;" and yet after some examination of circumstances, finds himself obliged to own, that "it will perhaps appear that he only liked one mode of expence better than another, and saved merely that he might have something to give."

One observation which Johnson makes in Swift's life should be often inculcated: "It may be justly supposed, that there was in his conversation what appears so frequently in his letters, an affectation of familiarity with the great, an ambition of momentary equality, sought and enjoyed by the neglect of those ceremonies which custom has established as the barriers between one order of society and another. This transgression of regularity was by himself and his admirers termed greatness of soul, but a great mind disdains to hold any thing by courtesy, and therefore never usurps what a lawful claimant may take away. He that encroaches on another's dignity puts himself in his power, he is either repelled with helpless indignity, or endured by clemency and condescension."

Various readings in the Life of SWIFT.

"Charity may be persuaded to think that it might be written by a man of a peculiar [opinions] *character*, without ill intention.

"He did not [disown] *deny* it

"[To] by whose kindness it is not unlikely that he was [indebted for] *advanced* to his benefices.

"[With] *for* this purpose he had recourse to Mr. Harley

"Sharpe, whom he [represents] *describes* as 'the harmless tool of others hate.'

"Harley was slow because he was [irresolute] *doubtful*

* See p. 78 of Vol. I

"When [readers were not many] *we were not yet a nation of readers.*

"[Every man who] *he that could say he knew him.*

"Every man of known influence has so many [more] petitions [than] *which he [can] cannot grant, that he must necessarily offend more than he [can gratify] gratifies*

"Ecclesiastical [preferments] *benefices*

"Swift [procured] *contrived* an interview.

"[As a writer] *In his works* he has given very different specimens.

"On all common occasions he habitually [assumes] *affects* a style of [superiority] *arrogance.*

"By the [omission] *neglect* of those ceremonies.

"That their merits filled the world [and] *or that* there was no [room for] *hope* of more."

I have not confined myself to the order of the "Lives," in making my few remarks. Indeed a different order is observed in the original publication, and in the collection of Johnson's Works. And should it be objected, that many of my various readings are inconsiderable, those who make the objection will be pleased to consider, that such small particulars are intended for those who are nicely critical in composition, to whom they will be an acceptable selection.

"Spence's Anecdotes," which are frequently quoted and referred to in Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," are in a manuscript collection, made by the Reverend Dr. Joseph Spence, containing a number of particulars concerning eminent men. To each anecdote is marked the name of the person on whose authority it is mentioned. This valuable collection is the property of the Duke of Newcastle, who upon the application of Sir Lucas Pepys, was pleased to permit it to be put into the hands of Dr. Johnson, who I am sorry to think made but an awkward return. "Great assistance (says he) has been given me by Mr Spence's Collection, of which I consider the communication as a favour worthy of public acknowledgement," but he has not owned to whom he was obliged; so that the acknowledgement is unappropriated to his Grace.

While the world in general was filled with admiration of Johnson's

Cor et Ad—Line 3 On "him" put the following note—"From this disreputable class, I except an ingenious, though not satisfactory defence of HAMMOND, which I did not see till lately, by the favour of its authour, my amiable friend, the Reverend Mr Bevil, who published it without his name. It is a juvenile performance, but elegantly written, with classical enthusiasm of sentiment, and yet with a becoming modesty and great respect for Dr Johnson."

"Lives of the Poets," there were narrow circles in which prejudice and resentment were fostered, and from whence attacks of different sorts issued against him. By some violent Whigs he was arraigned of injustice to Milton, by some Cambridge men of depreciating Gray, and his expressing with a dignified freedom what he really thought of George, Lord Lyttelton, gave offence to some of the friends of that nobleman, and particularly produced a declaration of war against him from Mrs. Montague, the ingenious Essayist on Shakspeare, between whom and his Lordship a commerce of reciprocal compliments had long been carried on. In this war the smaller powers in alliance with him were of course led to engage, at least on the defensive, and thus I for one, was excluded from the enjoyment of "A Feast of Reason," such as Mr. Cumberland has described, with a keen, yet just and delicate pen, in his "OBSERVER." These minute inconveniencies gave not the least disturbance to Johnson. He nobly said, when I talked to him of the feeble, though shrill outcry which had been raised, "Sir, I considered myself as entrusted with a certain portion of truth. I have given my opinion sincerely, let them shew where they think me wrong."

While my friend is thus contemplated in the splendour derived from his last and perhaps most admirable work, I introduce him with peculiar propriety as the correspondent of WARREN HASTINGS, a man whose regard reflects dignity even upon JOHNSON, a man, the extent of whose abilities was equal to that of his power, and who, by those who are fortunate enough to know him in private life, is admired for his literature and taste, and beloved for the candour, moderation, and mildness of his character. Were I capable of paying a suitable tribute of admiration to him, I should certainly not withhold it at a moment* when it is not possible that I should be suspected of being an interested flatterer. But how weak would be my voice after that of the millions whom he governed. His condescending and obliging compliance with my solicitation, I with humble gratitude acknowledge, and while by publishing his letter to me, accompanying the valuable communication, I do eminent honour to my great friend, I shall entirely disregard any invidious suggestions, that as I in some degree participate in the honour, I have, at the same time, the gratification of my own vanity in view.

* January, 1791

Second Edition —Line 22 "WARREN HASTINGS!"¹

Ibid —Line 31 "governed!"

¹ This little touch was, no doubt, added to increase the effect.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq

" Park lane, Dec 2 1790.

" SIR,—I have been fortunately spared the troublesome suspense of a long search, to which, in performance of my promise, I had devoted this morning, by lighting upon the objects of it among the first papers that I laid my hands on: my veneration for your great and good friend, Dr Johnson, and the pride, or I hope something of a better sentiment, which I indulged in possessing such memorials of his good will towards me, having induced me to bind them in a parcel containing other select papers, and labelled with the titles appertaining to them. They consist but of three letters, which I believe were all that I ever received from Dr. Johnson. Of these, one, which was written in quadruplicate, under the different dates of its respective dispatches, has already been made publick, but not from any communication of mine. This, however, I have joined to the rest, and have now the pleasure of sending them to you for the use to which you informed me it was your desire to destine them

" My promise was pledged with the condition, that if the letters were found to contain any thing which should render them improper for the publick eye, you would dispense with the performance of it. You will have the goodness, I am sure, to pardon my recalling this stipulation to your recollection, as I should be loth to appear negligent of that obligation which is always implied in an epistolary confidence. In the reservation of that right I have read them over with the most scrupulous attention, but have not seen in them the slightest cause on that ground to withhold them from you. But, though not on that, yet on another ground I own I feel a little, yet but a little, reluctance to part with them. I mean on that of my own credit, which I fear will suffer by the information conveyed by them, that I was early in the possession of such valuable instructions for the beneficial employment of the influence of my late tation, and (as it may seem) have so little availed myself of them. Whether I could, if it were necessary, defend myself against such an imputation, it little concerns the world to know. I look only to the effect which these relicks may produce, considered as evidences of the virtues of their authour: and believing that they will be found to display an uncommon warmth of private friendship, and a mind ever attentive to the improvement and extension of useful knowledge, and solicitous for the interests of mankind, I can cheerfully submit to the little sacrifice of my own fame to contribute to the illustration of so great and venerable a character. They cannot

be better applied, for that end, than by being entrusted to your hands. Allow me, with this offering, to infer from it a proof of the very great esteem with which I have the honour to profess, myself, Sir,

“ Your most obedient

“ And most humble servant,

“ WARREN HASTINGS.

“ P. S. At some future time, and when you have no further occasion for these papers, I shall be obliged to you if you would return them ”

The last of the three letters thus graciously put into my hands, and which has already appeared in publick, belongs to this year, but I shall previously insert the two first in the order of their dates. They altogether form a grand group in my biographical picture

To the Honourable WARREN HASTINGS, Esq.

“ SIR,—Though I have had but little personal knowledge of you, I have had enough to make me wish for more, and though it be now a long time since I was honoured by your visit, I had too much pleasure from it to forget it. By those whom we delight to remember, we are unwilling to be forgotten, and therefore I cannot omit this opportunity of reviving myself in your memory by a letter which you will receive from the hands of my friend Mr. Chambers,* a man, whose purity of manners and vigour of mind are sufficient to make every thing welcome that he brings.

“ That this is my only reason for writing, will be too apparent by the uselessness of my letter to any other purpose. I have no questions to ask, not that I want curiosity after either the ancient or present state of regions, in which have been seen all the power and splendour of wide-extended empire, and which, as by some grant of natural superiority, supply the rest of the world with almost all that pride desires, and luxury enjoys. But my knowledge of them is too scanty to furnish me with proper topics of enquiry, I can only wish for information, and hope, that a mind comprehensive like yours will find leisure, amidst the cares of your important station, to enquire into many subjects of which the European world either thinks not at all, or

* Now Sir Robert Chalmers, one of his Majesty's Judges in India.
Cor et Ad—Note For “Chalmers” read “Chambers”

thinks with deficient intelligence and uncertain conjecture. I shall hope, that he who once intended to increase the learning of his country by the introduction of the Persian language, will examine nicely the traditions and histories of the East, that he will survey the wonders of its ancient edifices, and trace the vestiges of its ruined cities, and that, at his return, we shall know the arts and opinions of a race of men, from whom very little has been hitherto derived

"You, Sir, have no need of being told by me, how much may be added by your attention and patronage to experimental knowledge and natural history. There are arts of manufacture practised in the countries in which you preside, which are yet very imperfectly known here, either to artificers or philosophers. Of the natural productions, animate and inanimate, we yet have so little intelligence, that our books are filled, I fear, with conjectures about things which an Indian peasant knows by his senses

"Many of those things my first wish is to see, my second to know by such accounts as a man like you will be able to give

"As I have not skill to ask proper questions, I have likewise no such access to great men as can enable me to send you any political information. Of the agitations of an unsettled government, and the struggles of a feeble ministry, care is doubtless taken to give you more exact accounts than I can obtain. If you are inclined to interest yourself much in public transactions, it is no misfortune to you to be so distant from them

"That literature is not totally forsaking us, and that your favourite language is not neglected, will appear from the book,* which I should have pleased myself more with sending, if I could have presented it bound, but time was wanting. I beg, however, Sir, that you will accept it from a man very desirous of your regard, and that if you think me able to gratify you by any thing more important, you will employ me

"I am now going to take leave, perhaps a very long leave, of my dear Mr Chambers. That he is going to live where you govern, may justly alleviate the regret of parting, and the hope of seeing both him and you again, which I am not willing to mingle with doubt, must at present, comfort as it can, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"March 30, 1774"

* Jones's "Persian Grammar."

To the same.

"SIR,—Being informed that by the departure of a ship, there is now an opportunity of writing to Bengal, I am unwilling to slip out of your memory by my own negligence, and therefore take the liberty of reminding you of my existence, by sending you a book which is not yet made publick

"I have lately visited a region less remote, and less illustrious than India, which afforded some occasions for speculation, what occurred to me, I have put into the volume," of which I beg your acceptance

"Men in your station seldom have presents totally disinterested, my book is received, let me now make my request

"There is, Sir, somewhere within your government, a young adventurer, one Chauncy Lawrence, whose father is one of my oldest friends. Be pleased to shew the young man what countenance is fit, whether he wants to be restrained by your authority, or encouraged by your favour. His father is now President of the College of Physicians, a man venerable for his knowledge, and more venerable for his virtue.

"I wish you a prosperous government, a safe return, and a long enjoyment of plenty and tranquillity. I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient

"And most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"London, Dec 20, 1774 "

To the same

"Jan 9, 1781

"SIR,—Amidst the importance and multiplicity of affairs in which your great office engages you, I take the liberty of recalling your attention for a moment to literature, and will not prolong the interruption by an apology, which your character makes needless.

"Mr Hoole, a gentleman long known, and long esteemed in the India-House, after having translated Tasso, has undertaken Anosto. How well he is qualified for his undertaking he had already shewn. He is desirous, Sir, of your favour in promoting his proposals, and flatters me by supposing that my testimony may advance his interest.

"It is a new thing for a clerk of the India-House to translate poets—it is new for a Governour of Bengal to patronize

* "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland "

learning. That he may find his ingenuity rewarded, and that learning may flourish under your protection, is the wish of, Sir,

‘ Your most humble servant,

“ SAM JOHNSON ”

I wrote to him in February, complaining of having been troubled by a recurrence of the perplexing question of Liberty and Necessity— and mentioning that I hoped soon to meet him again in London.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

“ DEAR SIR,—I hoped you had got rid of all this hypocrisy of misery What have you to do with Liberty and Necessity? Or what more than to hold your tongue about it? Do not doubt but I shall be most heartily glad to see you here again, for I love every part about you but your affectation of distress

“ I have at last finished my *Lives*, and have laid up for you a load of copy, all out of order, so that it will amuse you a long time to set it right Come to me, my dear Boszy, and let us be as happy as we can. We will go again to the Mitre, and talk old times over. I am, dear Sir,

“ Yours, affectionately,

“ SAM. JOHNSON

“ March 14, 1781 ”

On Monday, March 19, I arrived in London, and on Tuesday, the 20th, met him in Fleet-street, walking, or rather indeed moving along; for his march is thus described in a very just and picturesque manner, in a short *Life** of him published by Kearsley, very soon after his death “When he walked the streets, what with the constant roll of his head, and the concomitant motion of his body, he appeared to make his way by that motion, independent of his feet.” That he was often much stared at while he advanced in this manner, may easily be believed, but it was not safe to make sport of one so robust as he was Mr Langton saw him one day, in a fit of absence, by a sudden start, drive the load off a porter’s back, and walk

* With this well-chosen motto—

“ ————— From his cradle
He was a SCHOLAR, and a ripe and good one .
And to add greater honours to his age
Than man could give him, he died fearing Heaven ” SHAKESPEARE.

Second Edition—Line 27 “published by Kearsley” omitted from the text, and transferred to note before the words “With this well-chosen motto.”

forward briskly, without being conscious of what he had done. The porter was very angry, but stood still, and eyed the huge figure with much earnestness, till he was satisfied that his wisest course was to be quiet, and take up his burthen again.

Our accidental meeting in the street after a long separation was a pleasing surprize to us both. He stepped aside with me into Falcon-court, and made kind inquiries about my family, and as we were in a hurry going different ways, I promised to call on him next day; he said he was engaged to go out in the morning. "Early, Sir," said I. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, a London morning does not go with the sun "

I waited on him next evening, and he gave me a quantity of his original manuscript of his "Lives of the Poets," which he had preserved for me

I found that his friend, Mr Thrale, was now very ill, and had removed, I suppose by the solicitation of Mrs. Thrale,¹ to a house in Grosvenor-square I was sorry to find him sadly changed in his appearance.

He told me I might now have the pleasure to see Dr Johnson drink wine again, for he had lately returned to it When I mentioned this to Johnson, he said, " I drink it now sometimes, but not socially " The first evening that I was with him at Thrale's, I observed he poured a quantity of it into a large glass, and swallowed it greedily Every thing about his character and manners was forcible and violent, there never was any moderation , many a day did he fast, many a year did he refrain from wine, but when he did eat, it was voraciously; when he did drink wine, it was copiously. He could practise abstinence, but not temperance

Mrs Thrale and I had a dispute, whether Shakspeare or Milton had drawn the most admirable picture of a man * I was for Shak-

* Shakspeare makes Hamlet thus describe his father

" See what a grace was seated on this brow,
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command,
A station like the herald, Mercury,
New lighted on a Heaven-kissing hill
A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man "

Milton thus portrays our first parent, Adam

" His fair large front and eye sublime declar'd
Absolute rule, and hyacinthin locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clust'ring, but not beneath his shoulders broad "

¹ " Spiteful again ! " writes Mrs. Piozzi opposite this passage, " he went by direc-

speare, Mrs Thrale for Milton, and upon a fair hearing, Johnson decided for my opinion

I told him of one of Mr Burke's playful sallies upon Dean Marlay. "I don't like the Deanery of *Ferns*, it sounds so like a *barren* title" — "Dr. *Heath* should have it," said I. Johnson laughed, and condescending to trifle in the same mode of conceit, suggested Dr *Moss*.

He said, "Mrs Montagu has dropt me. Now, Sir, there are people whom one should like very well to drop, but would not wish to be dropped by." He certainly was vain of the society of ladies, and could make himself very agreeable to them when he chose it; Sir Joshua Reynolds agreed with me that he could¹ Mr Gibbon, with his usual sneer, controverted it, perhaps in resentment of Johnson's having talked with some disgust of his ugliness, which one should think a *philosopher* would not mind. Dean Marlay wittily observed, "A lady may be vain when she can turn a wolf-dog into a lap-dog"

The Election for Ayrshire, my own county, was this spring tried upon a petition, before a Committee of the House of Commons I was one of the Counsel for the sitting member, and took the liberty of previously stating different points to Johnson, who never failed to see them clearly, and to supply me with some good hints. He dictated to me the following note upon the registration of deeds :

"ALL laws are made for the convenience of the community; what is legally done, should be legally recorded, that the state of things may be known, and that wherever evidence is requisite, evidence may be had. For this reason, the obligation to frame and establish a legal register is enforced by a legal penalty, which penalty is the want of that perfection and plenitude of right which a register would give. Thence it follows, that this is not an objection merely legal, for the reason on which the law stands being equitable, makes it an equitable objection"

"This (said he) you must enlarge on, when speaking to the Committee. You must not argue there, as if you were arguing in the schools, close reasoning will not fix their attention, you must say the same thing over and over again, in different words

tion of his physicians, where they could easiest attend to him" And in her *Thraliana* (under date January, 1781) she seemed to anticipate this objection "O lord, the people will sure enough throw stones at me now, when they see a dying man go to such mad expence"

He, however, dear creature, is

absolute, since he suspects his head to be suspected"

¹ "Almost every woman he knew was a woman of *uncommon merit* with him, if they but coaxed him, which they all did, and that was his only criterion of their merits Nor would he ever be at the trouble of any other"—*Barrett's Margins*.

If you say it but once, they miss it in a moment of inattention. It is unjust, Sir, to censure lawyers for multiplying words when they argue; it is *necessary* for them to multiply words "

His notion of the duty of a member of Parliament, sitting upon an election committee was very high, and when he was told of a gentleman upon one of those committees, who read the newspapers part of the time, and slept the rest, while the merits of a vote were examined by the counsel, and as an excuse, when challenged by the chairman for such behaviour, bluntly answered, "I had made up my mind upon that case" Johnson, with an indignant contempt, said, "If he was such a rogue as to make up his mind upon a case without hearing it, he should not have been such a fool as to tell it"—"I think (said Mr. Dudley Long) the Doctor has pretty plainly made him out to be both rogue and fool"

Johnson's profound reverence for the Hierarchy made him expect from Bishops the highest degree of decorum, he was offended even at their going to taverns, "A bishop (said he) has nothing to do at a tippling-house. It is not indeed immoral in him to go to a tavern, neither would it be immoral in him to whip a top in Grosvenor-square But, if he did, I hope the boys would fall upon him and apply the whip to *him*. There are gradations in conduct, there is morality—decency—propriety. None of these should be violated by a bishop. A bishop should not go to a house where he may meet a young fellow leading out a wench" BOSWELL. "But, Sir, every tavern does not admit women" JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, any tavern will admit a well-drest man and a well-drest woman, they will not perhaps admit a woman whom they see every night walking by their door, in the street. But a well-drest man may lead in a well-drest woman to any tavern in London Taverns sell meat and drink, and will sell them to any body who can eat and can drink You may as well say that a mercer will not sell silks to a woman of the town."

He also disapproved of bishops going to routs, at least of their staying at them longer than their presence commanded respect. He mentioned a particular bishop. "Poh (said Mrs. Thrale) the Bishop of ———¹ is never minded at a rout" BOSWELL. "When a Bishop places himself in a situation where he has no distinct character, and is of no consequence, he degrades the dignity of his order." JOHNSON. "Mr Boswell, Madam, has said it as correctly as could be."

Nor was it only in the dignitaries of the Church that Johnson

¹ St. Asaphs, Mr Croker suggests.

required a particular decorum and delicacy of behaviour ; he justly considered that the clergy, as men set apart for the sacred office of serving at the altar, and impressing the minds of men with the awful concerns of a future state, should be somewhat more serious than the generality of mankind, and have a suitable composure of manners. A due sense of the dignity of their profession, independent of higher motives, will ever prevent them from losing their distinction in an indiscriminate sociality, and did such as affect this, know how much it lessens them in the eyes of those whom they think to please by it, they would feel themselves much mortified

Johnson, and his friend, Beauclerk, were once together in company with several clergymen, who thought they should appear to advantage, by assuming the lax jollity of *men of the world*, which, as it may be observed in similar cases, they carried to noisy excess. Johnson, who they expected would be *entertained*, sate grave and silent for some time, at last, turning to Beauclerk, he said, by no means in a whisper, " This merriment of parsons is mighty offensive "

Even the dress of a clergyman should be in character, and nothing can be more despicable than conceited attempts at avoiding the appearance of the clerical order ; attempts, which are as ineffectual as they are pitiful. Dr Porteus, now Bishop of London, in his excellent charge when presiding over the diocese of Chester, justly animadverted upon this subject, and observes of a reverend fop, that he " can be but *half a beau* "

Addison, in " The Spectator," has given us a fine portrait of a clergyman, who is supposed to be a member of his *Club*, and Johnson has exhibited a model, in the character of Mr Mudge,* which has escaped the collectors of his works, but which he owned to me, and which indeed he shewed to Sir Joshua Reynolds at the time when it was written. It bears the genuine marks of Johnson's best manner, and is as follows.

" The Reverend Mr *Zachariah Mudge*, Prebendary of Exeter, and Vicar of St. Andrews in Plymouth, a man equally eminent for his virtues and abilities, and at once beloved as a companion and revered as a pastor. He had that general curiosity to which no kind of knowledge is indifferent or superfluous, and that general benevolence by which no order of men is hated or despised

" His principles both of thought and action were great and comprehensive. By a solicitous examination of objections, and judicious

comparison of opposite arguments, he attained what enquiry never gives but to industry and perspicuity, a firm and unshaken settlement of conviction. But his firmness was without asperity, for, knowing with how much difficulty truth was sometimes found, he did not wonder that many missed it.

"The general course of his life was determined by his profession; he studied the sacred volumes in the original languages, with what diligence and success, his *Notes upon the Psalms* give sufficient evidence. He once endeavoured to add the knowledge of Arabick to that of Hebrew, but finding his thoughts too much diverted from other studies, after some time, desisted from his purpose.

"His discharge of parochial duties was exemplary. How his *Sermons* were composed, may be learned from the excellent volume which he has given to the publick, but how they were delivered, can be known only to those that heard them, for as he appeared in the pulpit, words will not easily describe him. His delivery, though unconstrained was not negligent, and though forcible was not turbulent, disdaining anxious nicety of emphasis, and laboured artifice of action, it captivated the hearer by its natural dignity, it roused the sluggish, and fixed the volatile, and detained the mind upon the subject, without directing it to the speaker.

"The grandeur and solemnity of the preacher did not intrude upon his general behaviour, at the table of his friends he was a companion communicative and attentive, of unaffected manners, of manly cheerfulness, willing to please, and easy to be pleased. His acquaintance was universally solicited, and his presence obstructed no enjoyment which religion did not forbid. Though studious he was popular, though argumentative he was modest, though inflexible he was candid, and though metaphysical yet orthodox."

On Friday, March 30, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, with the Earl of Charlemont, Sir Annesley Stewart, Mr Eliot, of Port-Eliot, Mr. Burke, Dean Marlay, now Bishop of Clonfert, Mr. Langton, a most agreeable day, of which I regret that every circumstance is not preserved, but it is unreasonable to require such a multiplication of felicity.

Mr Eliot, with whom Dr. Walter Harte had travelled, talked to us of his "*History of Gustavus Adolphus*," which he said was a very good book in the German translation. JOHNSON "Harte was excessively vain. He put copies of his book in manuscript

* "London Chronicle," May 2, 1769. This respectable man is there mentioned to have died on the 3d of April, that year. at Colfeet, the seat of Thomas Veale, Esq in his way to London.

into the hands of Lord Chesterfield and Lord Granville, that they might revise it. Now, how absurd was it to suppose that two such noblemen would revise so big a manuscript. Poor man! he left London the day of the publication of his book, that he might be out of the way of the great praise he was to receive; and he was ashamed to return, when he found how ill his book had succeeded. It was unlucky in coming out on the same day with Robertson's 'History of Scotland. His husbandry, however, is good' Boswell "So he was fitter for that than for heroic history. He did well when he turned his sword into a ploughshare."

Mr Eliot mentioned a curious liquor peculiar to his country, which the Cornish fishermen drink. They call it *Mahogany*, and it is made of two parts gin, and one part treacle, well beat together. I begged to have some of it made, which was done with proper skill by Mr Eliot. I thought it very good liquor, and said it was a counterpart of what is called *Athol Porridge* in the Highlands of Scotland, which is a mixture of whisky and honey. Johnson said, "that must be a better liquor than the Cornish, for both its component parts are better." He also observed, "*Mahogany* must be a modern name, for it was not long since the wood called mahogany was known in this country." I mentioned his scale of liquors;—claret for boys—port for men—brandy for heroes. "Then (said Mr Burke) let me have claret. I love to be a boy, to have the careless gaiety of boyish days." JOHNSON. 'I should drink claret too, if it would give me that, but it does not: it neither makes boys men, nor men boys. You'll be drowned by it before it has any effect upon you.'

I venture to mention a ludicrous paragraph in the news papers, that Dr Johnson was learning to dance of Vestris. Lord Charlemont, wishing to excite him to talk, proposed, in a whisper, that he should be asked, whether it was true. "Shall I ask him?" said his Lordship. We were, by a great majority, clear for the experiment. Upon which his Lordship very gravely and with a courteous air said, "Pray, Sir, is it true that you are taking lessons of Vestris?" This was risking a good deal, and required the boldness of a General of Irish Volunteers to make the attempt. Johnson was at first startled, and in some heat answered, "How can your Lordship ask so simple a question?" But immediately recovering himself, whether from unwillingness to be deceived, or to appear deceived, or whether from real good humour, he kept up the joke: "Nay, but if any body were to answer the paragraph, and contradict it, I'd have a reply, and would say, that he who contradicted it was no friend either to Vestris or me. For why should not Dr.

Johnson add to his other powers a little corporeal agility? Socrates learnt to dance at an advanced age, and Cato learnt Greek at an advanced age. Then it might proceed to say, that this Johnson, not content with dancing on the ground, might dance on the rope; and they might introduce the elephant dancing on the rope. A nobleman wrote a play, called 'Love in a hollow Tree.' He found out that it was a bad one, and therefore wished to buy up all the copies, and burn them.¹ The Duchess of Marlborough had kept one, and when he was against her at an election, she had a new edition of it printed, and prefixed to it, as a frontispiece, an elephant dancing on a rope, to shew, that his Lordship's writing comedy was as awkward as an elephant dancing on a rope "

On Sunday, April 1, I dined with him at Mr. Thrale's, with Sir Philip Jennings Clerk and Mr Perkins, who had the superintendence of Mr Thrale's brewery, with a salary of five hundred pounds a year Sir Philip had the appearance of a gentleman of ancient family, well advanced in life. He wore his own white hair in a bag of goodly size, a black velvet coat, with an embroidered waistcoat, and very rich laced ruffles, which Mrs. Thrale said were old fashioned, but which, for that reason, I thought the more respectable, more like a Tory; yet Sir Philip was then in opposition in parliament. "Ah, Sir, (said Johnson,) ancient ruffles and modern principles do not agree" Sir Philip defended the opposition to the American war ably and with temper, and I joined him He said, the majority of the nation was against the ministry JOHNSON. "I, Sir, am against the ministry, but it is for having too little of that of which opposition thinks they have too much Were I minister, if any man wagged his finger against me, he should be turned out; for that which it is in the power of Government to give at pleasure to one or to another, should be given to the supporters of Government If you will not oppose at the expense of losing your place, your opposition will not be honest, you will feel no serious grievance, and the present opposition is only a contest to get what others have. Sir Robert Walpole acted as I would do. As to the American war, the *sense* of the nation is *with* the ministry The majority of those who can *understand* is with it, the majority of those who can only *hear* is against it, and as those who can only hear are more numerous than those who can understand, and opposition is always loudest, a majority of the rabble will be for opposition."

Second Edition.—Line 6 William, the first Viscount Grimston.

¹ The piece was written when he was only thirteen years old.

This boisterous vivacity entertained us, but the fact really was that those who could understand the best were against the American war, as almost every man now is, when the question has been coolly considered

Mrs Thrale¹ gave high praise to a gentleman of our acquaintance JOHNSON "Nay, my dear lady, don't talk so. Mr. ****'s character is very *short*. It is nothing. He fills a chair. He is a man of a genteel appearance, and that is all. I know nobody who blasts by praise as you do for whenever there is exaggerated praise, every body is set against a character. They are provoked to attack it. Now there is *****. you praised that man with such disproportion, that I was incited to lessen him, perhaps more than he deserves. His blood is upon your head² By the same principle, your malice defeats itself, for your censure is too violent And yet (looking to her with a leering smile) she is the first woman in the world could she but restrain that wicked tongue of hers—she would be the only woman could she but command that little whirligig"

Upon the subject of exaggerated praise I took the liberty to say, that I thought there might be very high praise given to a known character which deserved it, and therefore it would not be ex-

Cor et Ad—Line 5 For "gentleman of our acquaintance" read "Mr Dudley Long (now North)"

Ibid—Line 6 For "Mr *****" read "Mr Long's"

Ibid—Line 8 On "all" put the following note—"Here Johnson condescended to play upon the words *Long* and *short*. But little did he know that, owing to Mr Long's reserve in his presence, he was talking thus of a gentleman distinguished amongst his acquaintance, for acuteness of wit, one to whom I think the French expression, '*Il petite d'esprit*,' is particularly suited. He has gratified me by mentioning that he heard Dr Johnson say, 'Sir, if I were to lose Boswell, it would be a limb amputated'"

Ibid—Line 11 For "*****" read "Pepys," and put the following note—"William Weller Pepys, Esq. one of the Masters in the High Court of Chancery, and well known in polite circles. My acquaintance with him is not sufficient to enable me to speak of him from my own judgement. But I know that both at Eton and Oxford he was the intimate friend of the late Sir James Macdonald, the *Marcellus* of Scotland whose extraordinary talents, learning, and virtues, will ever be remembered with admiration and regret"³

¹ The frivolous lady came in late, and though her husband was dying, had spent the evening at Lady Rothes', and "was cheerful"

² Mrs Piozzi protested against this speech as un-Johnsonian. "A phrase," she wrote, "he never would have used"

³ This will be noted as a good specimen of the rather capricious changes that Boswell made in his work, and to which he was no doubt led by a fantastic train of reasoning peculiarly his own. In the

first edition the name of the gentleman whom he disposes of so cavalierly is withheld, but the number of stars was sufficient to identify him. The author fancied he might introduce it at full length in the second, and neutralize the offence by a handsome compliment in a note. Possibly, too, he felt that Dr Johnson's special testimonial to himself would have little weight if merely reported by an anonymous person.

aggrated. Thus, one might say of Mr. Edmund Burke, He is a very wonderful man. JOHNSON. "No, Sir, you would not be safe if another man had a mind perversely to contradict He might answer, Where is all the wonder? Burke is, to be sure, a man of uncommon abilities, with a great quantity of matter in his mind, and a great fluency of language in his mouth But we are not to be stunned and astonished by him. So you see, Sir, even Burke would suffer, not from any fault of his own, but from your folly "

Mrs. Thrale mentioned a gentleman who had acquired a fortune of four thousand a year in trade, but was absolutely miserable because he could not talk in company, so miserable, that he was impelled to lament his situation in the street to ***** , whom he hates, and who he knows despises him. "I am a most unhappy man (said he) I am invited to conversations I go to conversations , but, alas! I have no conversation " JOHNSON "Man commonly cannot be successful in different ways. This gentleman has spent, in getting four thousand pounds a year, the time in which he might have learnt to talk, and now he cannot talk " Mr. Perkins made a shrewd and droll remark "If he had got his four thousand a year as a mountebank, he might have learnt to talk at the same time that he was getting his fortune."

Some other gentlemen¹ came in. The conversation concerning the person whose character Dr Johnson had treated so slightly, as he did not know his merit, was resumed Mrs Thrale said, "You think so of him, Sir, because he is quiet, and does not exert himself with force. You'll be saying the same thing of Mr ***** there, who sits as quiet—" This was not well bred, and Johnson did not let it pass without correction. "Nay, Madam, what right have you to talk thus? Both Mr ***** and I have reason to take it ill. You may talk so of Mr ***** but why do you make *me* do it Have I said any thing against Mr ***** You have *set* him, that I might shoot him but I have not shot him "

One of the gentlemen said, he had seen three folio volumes of Dr Johnson's sayings collected by me "I must put you right, Sir (said I), for I am very exact in authenticity. You could not see folio volumes, for I have none you might have seen some in quarto and octavo This is inattention which one should guard against " JOHNSON. "Sir, it is a want of concern about veracity He does not know that he saw *any* volumes. If he had seen them he could have remembered their size."

Mr. Thrale appeared very lethargick to-day. I saw him again on

¹ Among whom was Sir John Lade — *Thraliana*.

Monday evening, at which time he was not thought to be in immediate danger;¹ but early in the morning of Wednesday the 4th, he expired." Johnson was in the house, and thus mentions the event: "I felt almost the last flutter of his pulse, and looked for the last time upon the face that for fifteen years had never been turned upon me but with respect and benignity."^a Upon that day there was a *Call* of the LITERARY CLUB, but Johnson apologised for his absence by the following note.

"MR JOHNSON knows that Sir Joshua Reynolds and the other

^a Prayers and Meditations, p 191

¹ "Johnson, Sir Philip, and Baretta dined with him. Mr Thrale eat voraciously—so voraciously that, encouraged by Jebb and Pepys, who had charged me to do so, I checked him rather severely, and Mr Johnson added these remarkable words 'Sir, after the denunciation of your physician this morning, such eating is little better than suicide.' He did not, however, desist, and Sir Philip said, he eat apparently in defiance of control, and that it was better for us to say nothing to him. Johnson observed that he thought so too, and that he spoke more from a sense of duty than a hope of success."—*Thraliana*

^a Mrs Piozzi gives the following dramatic account of her husband's death—"I was enumerating the people who were to meet the Indian ambassadors on the Wednesday. I had been to Negri's and bespoke an elegant entertainment."

"On the next day, Tuesday the 3rd, Mrs Hinchliffe called on me in the morning to go see Webber's drawings of the South Sea rarities. When I came home to dress, Piozzi, who was in the next room teaching Hester to sing, began lamenting that he was engaged to Mrs Locke on the following evening, when I had such a world of company to meet these fine Orientals."

I gave him the money I had collected for his benefit—35! I remember it was—a banker's note—and burst out o' crying, and said, I was sure I should not go to it. The man was shocked, and wondered what I meant.

"Miss Owen came to dinner, and Mr Thrale came home so well' and in such spirits' he had invited more people to my concert, or conversazione, or musical party, of the next day, and was delighted to think what a show we should make

He eat, however, more than enormously. Johnson was at the Bishop of Chester's. I went down in the course of the afternoon to see after my master as usual, and found him not asleep, but sitting with his legs up—*because*, as he expressed it. I kissed him, and said how good he was to be so careful of himself. He enquired who was above, but had no disposition to come up stairs. Miss Owen and Mrs Byron now took their leave. The Dr had been gone about twenty minutes when Hester went down to see her papa, and found him on the floor. What's the meaning of this? says she, in an agony. I chuse it, replies Mr Thrale firmly, I lie so o' purpose. She ran, however, to call his valet, who was gone out—happy to leave him so particularly *well*, as he thought. When my servant went instead, Mr Thrale bid him begone, in a firm tone, and added that he was very well and chose to lie so. By this time, however, Mr Crutchley was run down at Hetty's untreaty and had sent to fetch Pepys back. He was got but into Upper Brook Street, and found his friend in a most violent fit of the apoplexy, from which he only recovered to relapse into another, every one growing weaker as his strength grew less, till six o'clock on Wednesday morning, 4th April, 1781, when he died. Sir Richard Jebb, who was latched at the beginning of the distress, seeing death certain, quitted the house without even prescribing. Pepys did all that could be done, and Johnson, who was sent for at eleven o'clock, never left him, for while breath remained he still hoped. I ventured in once, and saw them cutting his clothes off to bleed him, but I saw no more."—*Autobiog*

Gentlemen will excuse his incomppliance with the Call, when they are told that Mr Thrale died this morning.

"Wednesday"

Mr. Thrale's death was a very essential loss to Johnson, who, although he did not foresee all that afterwards happened, was sufficiently convinced that the comforts which Mr. Thrale's family afforded him would now in a great measure cease. He, however, continued to shew a kind attention to his widow and children as long as it was acceptable, and he took upon him, with a very earnest concern, the office of one of his executors, the importance of which seemed greater than usual to him, from his circumstances having been always such that he had scarcely any share in the real business of life. His friends of the Club were in hopes that Mr. Thrale might have made a liberal provision for him for his life, which, as Mr Thrale left no son, and a very large fortune, it would have been highly to his honour to have done,¹ and, considering Dr Johnson's age, could not have been of long duration but he bequeathed him only two hundred pounds, which was the legacy given to each of his executors.² I could not but be somewhat diverted by hearing Johnson talk in a pompous manner of his new office, and particularly of the concerns of the brewery, which it was at last resolved should be sold.³ Lord Lucan tells a very good story, which, if not precisely exact, is certainly characteristic that when the sale of Thrale's brewery was going forward, Johnson appeared bustling about, with an ink-horn and pen in his button-hole, like an exciseman, and on being asked what he really considered to be the value of the property which was to be disposed of, answered, "We

¹ Mrs Piozzi states that Johnson's fondness for Thrale "had a dash of interest to keep it warm." She adds also (*Marginalia*) that he had some hopes from Reynolds and Dr Taylor. Mr Croker, as we have seen, imputed his quarrel with Langton to disappointment at not being named in his will. Thus is Johnson, in the view of such little souls, transformed into a wholesale legacy hunter.

² Cator, Crutchley, Smith, and Johnson were the four executors.

³ "If an angel from heaven had told me twenty years ago that the man I knew by the name of *Dictionary Johnson* should one day become partner with me in a great trade, and that we should jointly or separately sign notes, drafts, &c., for three or four thousand pounds of a morning, how unlikely it would have seemed

ever to happen!" Johnson, however, who desires above all other good the accumulation of new ideas, is but too happy with his present employment, and the influence I have over him, added to his own solid judgment and a regard for truth, will at last find it in a small degree difficult to win him from the dirty delight of seeing his name in a new character flaming away at the bottom of bonds and leases."

Such is this foolish lady's view of Johnson's motives in the assistance he gave her. These entries, though affectively written contemporaneously with the transactions recorded, seem, from the malice shown to Johnson, as if written *après-coup*. Baretti says (*Marginalia*) that "two hours after Thrale's death she ran away with Hetty to Brighton."

are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich, beyond the dreams of advance"¹

On Friday, April 6, he carried me to dine at a club, which, at his desire, had been lately formed at the Queen's Arms, in St. Paul's Church yard. He told Mr Hoole, that he wished to have a *City Club*, and asked him to collect one, but, said he, "Don't let them be *patriots*" The company to day were very sensible well-behaved men. I have preserved only two particulars of his conversation. He said, he was glad Lord George Gordon had escaped, rather than that a precedent should be established for hanging a man for *constructive treason*; which, in consistency with his true, manly, constitutional Toryism, he considered would be a dangerous engine of arbitrary power. And upon its being mentioned that an opulent and very indolent Scotch nobleman, who totally resigned the management of his affairs to a man of knowledge and abilities, had claimed some merit by saying, 'The next best thing to managing a man's own affairs well, is being sensible of incapacity, and not attempting it, but having full confidence in one who can do it.' JOHNSON "Nay, Sir, this is paltry. There is a middle course. Let a man give application, and depend upon it he will soon get above a despicable state of helplessness, and attain the power of *acting for himself*"

On Saturday, April 7, I dined with him at Mr Hoole's, with Governour Boucher and Captain Oime, both of whom had been long in the East-Indies, and being men of good sense and observation, were very entertaining. Johnson defended the oriental regulation of different *casts* of men, which was objected to as totally destructive of the hopes of rising in society by personal merit. He shewed that there was a *principle* in it sufficiently plausible by analogy. "We see (said he) in metals that there are different species, and so likewise in animals, though one species may not differ very widely from another, as in the species of dogs—the cur, the spaniel, the mastiff. The Bramins are the mastiffs of mankind."

On Thursday, April 12, I dined with him at a Bishop's, where were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr Berrenger, and some more company. He had dined the day before at another Bishop's. I have unfortunately recorded none of his conversation at the Bishop's where we dined together. but I have preserved his ingenious defence of his dining twice abroad in Passion-week, a laxity, in which I am con-

Cor et Ad—Line 24 For "*Boucher*" read "*Bouchier*."

¹ This speech is found also in Malone's note-book, but is given there as addressed to Barclay.

vinced he would not have indulged himself at the time when he wrote his solemn paper in "The Rambler," upon that awful season. It appeared to me, that by being much more in company, and enjoying more in luxurious living, he had contracted a keener relish of pleasure, and was consequently less rigorous in his religious rites. This he would not acknowledge, but he reasoned, with admirable sophistry, as follows "Why, Sir, a Bishop's calling company together in this week, is, to use the vulgar phrase, not *the thing*. But you must consider laxity is a bad thing, but preciseness is also a bad thing; and your general character may be more hurt by preciseness than by dining with a Bishop in Passion week. There might be a handle for reflection. It might be said, 'He refused to dine with a Bishop in Passion-week, but was three Sundays absent from church.'" BOSWELL "Very true, Sir. But suppose a man to be uniformly of good conduct, would it not be better that he should refuse to dine with a Bishop in this week, and so not encourage a bad practice by his example?" JOHNSON "Why, Sir, you are to consider whether you might not do more harm by lessening the influence of a Bishop's character by your disapprobation in refusing him, than by going to him."

To Mrs. LUCY PORTER, in Lichfield.

"DEAR MADAM,—Life is full of troubles. I have just lost my dear friend Thrale. I hope he is happy, but I have had a great loss. I am otherwise pretty well. I require some care myself, but that care is not ineffectual, and when I am out of order I think it often my own fault.

"The spring is now making quick advances. As it is the season in which the whole world is enlivened and invigorated, I hope that both you and I shall partake of its benefits. My desire is to see Lichfield, but being left executor to my friend, I know not whether I can be spared, but I will try, for it is now long since we saw one another, and how little we can promise ourselves many more interviews, we are taught by hourly examples of mortality. Let us try to live so as that mortality may not be an evil. Write to me soon, my dearest, your letters will give me great pleasure.

"I am sorry that Mr. Porter has not had his box, but by sending it to Mr. Mathias, who very readily undertook its conveyance, I did the best I could, and perhaps before now he has it.

"Be so kind as to make my compliments to my friends, I have

Erratum—Line 4. *Del* "m."

Cor. et Ad.—Line 24. After "care" read "of"

a great value for their kindness, and hope to enjoy it before summer is past. Do write to me. I am, dearest love,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"London, April 12, 1781"

On Friday, April 13, being Good-Friday, I went to St. Clement's-church with him, as usual. There I saw again his old fellow-collegian, Edwards, to whom I said, "I think Sir, Dr. Johnson and you meet only at church"—"Sir (said he) it is the best place we can meet in except Heaven, and I hope we shall meet there too" Dr Johnson told me that there was very little communication between Edwards and him, after their unexpected renewal of acquaintance. "But (said he, smiling) he met me once, and said, 'I am told you have written a very pretty book called *The Rambler*' I was unwilling that he should leave the world in total darkness, and sent him a set."

Mr Berrenger visited him to-day, and was very pleasing. We talked of an evening society for conversation at a house in town, of which we were all members, but of which Johnson said, "It will never do, Sir There is nothing served about there, neither tea, nor coffee, nor lemonade, nor any thing whatever, and depend upon it, Sir, a man does not love to go to a place from whence he comes out exactly as he went in. I endeavoured for argument's sake, to maintain that men of learning and talents might have very good intellectual society, without the aid of any little gratifications of the senses. Berrenger joined with Johnson, and said that without these any meeting would be dull and insipid. He would therefore have all the slight refreshments, nay, it would not be amiss to have some cold meat, and a bottle of wine upon a side-board "Sir, (said Johnson to me, with an air of triumph,) Mr Berrenger knows the world. Every body loves to have good things furnished to them without any trouble I told Mrs. Thrale once, that as she did not choose to have card-tables, she should have a profusion of the best sweetmeats, and she would be sure to have company enough come to her" The event proved the justice of Johnson's opinion, as to the impracticability of getting people to meet, when they know there is absolutely nothing to touch the palate, for this Society, though held at the house of a person deservedly much esteemed,

Cor et Ad—Line 35. *Dele* "The event," and all the remainder of that paragraph, and *read* as follows—"I agreed with my illustrious friend upon this subject, for it has pleased God to make man a composite animal, and where there is nothing to refresh the body, the mind will languish."

and composed of very eminent men, could not be preserved from gradual decay.

On Sunday, April 15, being Easter-day, after solemn worship in St. Paul's church, I found him alone; Dr Scott, of the Commons, came. He talked of its having been said, that Addison wrote some of his best papers in "The Spectator," when warm with wine. Dr Johnson did not seem willing to admit this. Dr Scott, as a confirmation of it related, that Blackstone composed his "Commentaries" with a bottle of port before him.

I told him, that in a company where I had lately been, a desire was expressed to know his authority for the shocking story of Addison's sending an execution into Steele's house. "Sir (said he) it is generally known, it is known to all who are acquainted with the literary history of that period. It is as well known, as that he wrote 'Cato.'" Mr Thomas Sheridan once defended Addison to me, by alledging that he did it in order to cover Steele's goods from other creditors, who were going to seize them.

We talked of the difference between the mode of education at Oxford, and that in the Colleges, where instruction is chiefly conveyed by lectures. JOHNSON "Lectures were once useful, but now, when all can read, and books are so numerous, lectures are unnecessary. If your attention fails, and you miss a part of a lecture, it is lost, you cannot go back as you do upon a book." Dr. Scott agreed with him. "But yet (said I) Dr. Scott, you yourself gave lectures at Oxford." He smiled. "You laughed (then said I) at those who came to you."

Dr Scott left us, and soon afterwards we went to dinner. Our company consisted of Mrs Williams, Mrs. Desmoulins, Mr. Levett, Mr Allen, the printer, and Mrs. Hall, sister of the Reverend Mr. John Wesley, and resembling him, as I thought, both in figure and manner. Johnson produced now, for the first time, some handsome silver salvers, which he told me he had bought fourteen years

Cor et Ad—Line 8. After "Blackstone," read a "sober man."

Ibid—Line 9. After "him," read "And found his mind invigorated and supported in the fatigue of his great work by a temperate use of it."

Second Edition—Line 17. On "seize them" a note—See this explained, p. 436 of this vol.

¹ This qualification, and turning what was an insinuation of inebriety into a compliment, can be thus explained. Dr Scott was hurt that his story should have been published, and subjected to such a construction, and he wrote an apology to Blackstone's family (*Maloniensis*). He then no doubt remonstrated with Boswell,

who made all the *amende* he could. It will be noticed, however, how firmly the author stood by his text, which he would rarely consent to cancel, though he took ingenious pains to qualify it, thus proving his faith in what it had cost him so much pains to secure.

ago; so it was a great day. I was not a little amused by observing Allen perpetually struggling to talk in the manner of Johnson, like the little frog in the fable, blowing himself up to resemble the stately ox.

I mentioned a kind of religious Robinhood Society, which met every Sunday evening, at Coachmaker's-hall, for free debate, and that the subject for this night was, the text which relates, with other miracles, which happened at our SAVIOUR's death, "And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Mrs Hall said it was a very curious subject, and she should like to hear it discussed JOHNSON. (somewhat warmly) "One would not go to such a place to hear it—one would not be seen in such a place—to give countenance to such a meeting" I, however, resolved that I would go. "But Sir, (said she to Johnson,) I should like to hear *you* discuss it" He seemed reluctant to engage in it. She talked of the resurrection of the human race in general, and maintained that we shall be raised with the same bodies. JOHNSON "Nay, Madam, we see that it is not to be the same body, for the Scripture uses the illustration of grain sown, and we know that the grain which grows is not the same with what is sown You cannot suppose that we shall rise with a diseased body; it is enough if there be such a sameness as to distinguish identity of person" She seemed desirous of knowing more, but he left the question in obscurity

Of apparitions, he observed, "A total disbelief of them is adverse to the opinion of the existence of the soul between death and the last day, the question simply is, whether departed spirits ever have the power of making themselves perceptible to us, a man who thinks he has seen an apparition, can only be convinced himself; his authority will not convince another, and his conviction, if rational, must be founded on being told something which cannot be known but by supernatural means."

He mentioned a thing as not unfrequent, of which I had never heard before—being *called*, that is, hearing one's name pronounced by the voice of a known person at a great distance, far beyond the possibility of being reached by any sound, uttered by human organs. "An acquaintance, on whose veracity I can depend, told me, that walking home one evening to Kilmarnock, he heard himself called from a wood, by the voice of a brother who had gone to America; and the next packet brought accounts of that brother's death." Machean asserted that this inexplicable *calling* was a thing very well known. Dr. Johnson said, that one day at Oxford, as he was

turning the key of his chamber, he heard his mother distinctly call *Sam*. She was then at Lichfield, but nothing ensued. This phenomenon is, I think, as wonderful as any other mysterious fact, which many people are very slow to believe, or rather, indeed, reject with an obstinate contempt.

Some time after this, upon his making a remark which escaped my attention, Mrs Williams and Mrs. Hall were both together striving to answer him. He grew angry, and called out loudly, "Nay, when you both speak at once it is intolerable." But checking himself, and softening, he said, "This one may say, though you *are* ladies." Then he brightened into gay humour, and addressed them in the words of one of the songs in "The Beggar's Opera,"

"But two at a time there's no mortal can bear"

"What, Sir, (said I,) are you going to turn Captain Macheath?" There was something as pleasantly ludicrous in this scene as can be imagined. The contrast between Macheath, Polly, and Lucy—and Dr. Samuel Johnson, blind, peevish Mrs. Williams, and lean, lank, preaching Mrs. Hall, was exquisite

I stole away to Coachmaker's-hall, and heard the difficult text of which we had talked, discussed with great decency, and some intelligence, by several speakers. There was a difference of opinion as to the appearance of ghosts in modern times, though the arguments for it, supported by Mr. Addison's authority, preponderated. The immediate subject of debate was embarrassed by the *bodies* of the saints having been said to rise, and by the question what became of them afterwards, did they return again to their graves? Or were they translated to Heaven? Only one evangelist mentions the fact,* and the commentators whom I have looked at, do not make the passage clear. There is, however, no occasion for our understanding it farther, than to know that it was one of the extraordinary manifestations of divine power, which accompanied the most important event that ever happened

On Friday, April 20, I spent with him one of the happiest days that I remember to have enjoyed in the whole course of my life. Mrs. Garrick, whose grief for the loss of her husband was, I believe, as sincere as wounded affection and admiration could produce, had this day, for the first time since his death, a select party of his friends to dine with her. The company was Miss Hannah More, who lived with her, and whom she called her Chaplain, Mrs.

* St. Matthew, chap xxvii v 52, 53

Boscawen, Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Burney, Dr. Johnson, and myself We found ourselves very elegantly entertained at her house in the Adelphi, where I have passed many a pleasing hour with him "who gladdened life." She looked very well, talked of her husband with complacency, and while she cast her eyes on his portrait, which hung over the chimney-piece, said, that "death was now the most agreeable object to her" The very semblance of David Garrick was cheering Mr. Beauclerk, with happy propriety, inscribed under that fine portrait of him, which by Lady Diana's kindness is now the property of my friend Mr. Langton, the following passage from his beloved Shakspeare -

"----- A merrier man,
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal
His eye begets occasion for his wit,
For ev'ry object that the one doth catch,
The other turns to a mirth-moving jest,
Which his fair tongue (Conceit's expositor)
Delivers in such apt and gracious words,
That rged ears play truant at his tales,
And younger hearings are quite ravished;
So sweet and voluble is his discourse "

We were all in fine spirits, and I whispered to Mrs. Boscawen, "I believe this is as much as can be made of life" In addition to a splendid entertainment, we were regaled with Lichfield ale, which had a peculiar appropriated value. Sir Joshua, and Dr Burney, and I, drank cordially of it to Dr. Johnson's health, and though he would not join us, he as cordially answered, "Gentlemen, I wish you all as well as you do me"

The general effect of this day dwells upon my mind in fond remembrance, but I do not find much conversation recorded. What I have preserved shall be faithfully given

Somebody mentioned Mr. Thomas Hollis, the strenuous Whig, who used to send over Europe presents of democratical books, with their boards stamped with daggers and caps of liberty. Mrs. Carter said, "He was a bad man. He used to talk uncharitably" JOHNSON. "Poh! poh! Madam; who is the worse for being talked of uncharitably? Besides, he was a dull poor creature as ever lived. And I believe he would not have done harm to a man whom he knew to be of very opposite principles to his own. I remember

once at the Society of Arts, when an advertisement was to be drawn up, he pointed me out as the man who could do it best. This, you will observe was kindness to me. I however slipped away and escaped it."

Mrs Carter having said of a certain person, "I doubt he was an Atheist." JOHNSON. "I don't know that. He might perhaps have become one, if he had had time to ripen, (smiling). He might have *exuberated* into an Atheist."

Sir Joshua Reynolds praised "Mudge's Sermons." JOHNSON. "'Mudge's Sermons' are good, but not practical. He grasps more sense than he can hold, he takes more corn than he can make into meal, he opens a wide prospect, but it is so distant, it is indistinct. I love 'Blair's Sermons.' Though the dog is a Scotchman, and a Presbyterian, and every thing he should not be, I was the first to praise them. Such was my candour." (smiling) MRS BOSCAWEN. "Such his great merit to get the better of all your prejudices." JOHNSON. "Why, Madam, let us compound the matter, let us ascribe it to my candour, and his merit."

In the evening we had a large company in the drawing-room, several ladies, the Bishop of Killaloe, D Percy, Mr. Chamberlayne, of the Treasury, &c &c. Somebody said the life of a mere literary man could not be very entertaining. JOHNSON. "But it certainly may. This is a remark which has been made, and repeated, without justice, why should the life of a literary man be less entertaining than the life of any other man? Are there not as interesting varieties in such a life? As a *literary life* it may be very entertaining." BOSWELL. "But it must be better surely, when it is diversified with a little active variety—such as his having gone to Jamaica,—or—his having gone to the Hebrides." Johnson was not displeased at this.

Talking of a very respectable authour, he told us a curious circumstance in his life, which was, that he had married a printer's devil. REYNOLDS. "A printer's devil, Sir! Why, I thought a printer's devil was a creature with a black face and in rags." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir. But I suppose, he had her face washed, and put clean clothes on her. (Then looking very serious, and very earnest) And she did not disgrace him—the woman had a bottom of good sense." The word *bottom* thus introduced, was so ludicrous, when contrasted with his gravity, that most of us could not forbear tittering.

Cor et Ad—Line 5 For "a certain" read "the same" ¹

¹ This first reading and the alteration where he wished to be cautious again exhibits one of Boswell's devices

and laughing, though I recollect that the Bishop of Killaloe kept his countenance with perfect steadiness, while Miss Hannah More slyly hid her face behind a lady's back who sate on the same settee with her. His pride could not bear that any expression of his should excite ridicule, when he did not intend it, he therefore resolved to assume and exercise despotick power, glanced sternly around, and called out in a strong tone, "Where's the merriment?" Then collecting himself, and looking awful, to make us feel how he could impose restraint, and as it were searching his mind for a still more ludicrous word, he slowly pronounced, "I say the *woman* was *fundamentally* sensible," as if he had said, hear this now, and laugh if you dare. We all sat composed as at a funeral

He and I walked away together, we stopped a little while by the rails of the Adelphi, looking on the Thames, and I said to him with tenderness, that I thought of two friends we had lost, who once lived in the buildings behind us, Beauclerk and Garrick. "Aye, Sir, (said he, tenderly,) and two such friends as cannot be supplied."

For some time after this day I did not see him very often, and of the conversation which I did enjoy, I am sorry to find I have preserved but little. I was at this time engaged in a variety of other matters, which required exertion and assiduity, and necessarily occupied almost all my time.

One day having spoken very freely of those who were then in power, he said to me, "Between ourselves, Sir, I do not like to give opposition the satisfaction of knowing how much I disapprove of the ministry" And when I mentioned that Mr. Burke had boasted how quiet the nation was in George the Second's reign, when Whigs were in power, compared with the present reign, when Tories governed "Why, Sir, (said he,) you are to consider that Tories having more reverence for government, will not oppose with the same violence as Whigs, who being unrestrained by that principle, will oppose by any means"

This month he lost not only Mr. Thrale, but another friend, Mr. William Strahan, Junior, printer, the eldest son of his old and constant friend, Printer to his Majesty.

To Mrs. STRAHAN.

"DEAR MADAM,—The grief which I feel for the loss of a very kind friend is sufficient to make me know how much you must suffer by the death of an amiable son; a man, of whom I think it may truly be said, that no one knew him who does not lament

him. I look upon myself as having a friend, another friend taken from me.

"Comfort, dear Madam, I would give you if I could, but I know how little the forms of consolation can avail. Let me, however, counsel you not to waste your health in unprofitable sorrow, but go to Bath, and endeavour to prolong your own life, but when we have all done all that we can, one friend must in time lose the other. I am, dear Madam,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON

"April 23, 1781"

On Tuesday, May 8, I had the pleasure of again dining with him and Mr Wilkes, at Mr Dilly's. No *negotiation* was now required to bring them together, for Johnson was so well satisfied with the former interview, that he was very glad to meet Wilkes again, who was this day seated between Dr Beattie and Dr. Johnson, (between Truth and Reason, as General Paoli said, when I told him of it). WILKES "I have been thinking, Dr. Johnson, that there should be a bill brought into parliament that the controverted elections for Scotland should be tried in that country, at their own Abbey of Holy-Rood House, and not here, for the consequence of trying them here is, that we have an inundation of Scotchmen, who come up and never go back again. Now here is Boswell, who has come up upon the election for his own county, which will not last a fortnight." JOHNSON "Nay, Sir, I see no reason why they should be tried at all, for, you know, one Scotchman is as good as another." WILKES "Pray, Boswell, how much may be got in a year by an Advocate at the Scotch bar?" BOSWELL "I believe two thousand pounds." WILKES "How can it be possible to spend that money in Scotland?" JOHNSON "Why, Sir, the money may be spent in England. but there is a harder question. If one man in Scotland gets possession of two thousand pounds, what remains for all the rest of the nation?" WILKES "You know, in the last war, the immense booty which Thurot carried off from the complete plunder of seven Scotch isles. He re-embarked with *three and six-pence*." Here again Johnson and Wilkes joined in extravagant sportive raillery upon the supposed poverty of Scotland, which Dr. Beattie and I did not think it worth our while to dispute.

The subject of quotation being introduced, Mr Wilkes censured it as pedantry. JOHNSON. "No, Sir, it is a good thing, there is a community of mind in it. Classical quotation is the *parole* of literary men all over the world." WILKES. "Upon the continent

they all quote the vulgate Bible. Shakespeare is chiefly quoted here, and we quote also Pope, Prior, Butler, Waller, and sometimes Cowley."

We talked of Letter-writing JOHNSON "It is now become so much the fashion to publish letters, that in order to avoid it, I put as little into mine as I can." BOSWELL. "Do what you will, Sir, you cannot avoid it. Should you even write as ill as you can, your letters would be published as curiosities.

' Behold a miracle! instead of wit
See two dull lines with Stanhope's pencil writ '"

He gave us an entertaining account of *Bet Flint*, a woman of the town, who, with some eccentric talents and much effrontery, forced herself upon his acquaintance. "Bet (said he) wrote her own *Lue in verse*," which she brought to me, wishing that I would furnish her with a Preface to it (laughing) I used to say of her, that she was generally slut and drunkard—occasionally, whore and thief. She had, however, genteel lodgings, a spinnet on which she played, and a boy that walked before her chair. Poor Bet was taken up on a charge of stealing a counterpane, and tried at the Old-Bailey. Chief Justice ———,¹ who loved a wench, summed up favourably, and she was acquitted. After which, Bet said, with a gay and satisfied air, 'Now that the counterpane is *my own*, I shall make a petticoat of it.' "²

Talking of oratory, Mr Wilkes described it as accompanied with all the charms of poetical expression. JOHNSON. "No, Sir, oratory

¹ Johnson, whose memory was wonderfully retentive, remembered the first four lines of this curious production, which have been communicated to me by a young lady of his acquaintance

"When first I drew my vital breath,
A little minikin I came upon earth,
And then I came from a dark abode,
Into this gay and gaudy world."

¹ Willes

² Mr Malone says "The account which Johnson had received on this occasion, was not quite accurate. BET was tried at the Old Bailey in September, 1758, not by the Chief Justice here alluded to, (who however tried another cause on the same day,) but before Sir William Moreton, Recorder, and she was acquitted, not in consequence of any favourable summing up of the Judge, but because the Prosecutrix, Mary Walshaw, could not prove that the goods charged to have been stolen, a counter-

pane, &c., were her property "

Madame d'Arblay supplied some additional touches. Johnson gave Bet half a crown instead of correcting the poems. She insisted on going to jail in a sedan-chair, with her foot-boy walking before her. "O, I loved Bet Flint!" added the Doctor. Mr Croker is very severe on Johnson for the mistake as to the judge who tried the case, saying that he was "here guilty, not merely of coarseness, but it seems of scandal." In Madame d'Arblay's version, the Doctor says, "The judge acquitted her."

is the power of beating down your adversary's arguments, and putting better in their place" WILKES "But this does not move the passions" JOHNSON. "He must be a weak man who is to be so moved." WILKES (naming a celebrated orator) "Amidst all the brilliancy of ——'s¹ imagination, and the exuberance of his wit, there is a strange want of *taste* It was observed of Apelles's Venus, that her flesh seemed as if she had been nourished by roses his oratory would sometimes make one suspect that he eats potatoes and drinks whisky."

Mr. Wilkes observed, how tenacious we are of forms in this country, and gave us an instance, the vote of the House of Commons for remitting money to pay the army in America in *Portugal pieces*, when, in reality, the remittance is made not in *Portugal money* but in our own *specie*. JOHNSON "Is there not a law, Sir, against exporting the current coin of the realm?" WILKES. "Yes, Sir. but might not the House of Commons, in case of real evident necessity, order our own current coin to be sent into our own colonies?"—Here Johnson, with that quickness of recollection which distinguished him so eminently, gave the *Middlesex Patriot* an admirable retort upon his own ground. "Sure, Sir, you don't think a *resolution of the House of Commons equal to the law of the land.*" WILKES (at once perceiving the application) "God forbid, Sir."—To hear what had been treated with such violence in "The False Alarm," now turned into pleasant repartee, was extremely agreeable. Johnson went on—"Locke observes well, that a prohibition to export the current coin is impolittick, for when the balance of trade happens to be against a state, the current coin *must* be exported"

Mr. Beauclerk's great library was this season sold in London by auction. Mr. Wilkes said, he wondered to find in it such a numerous collection of sermons, seeming to think it strange that a gentleman of Mr. Beauclerk's character in the gay world, should have chosen to have many compositions of that kind JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you are to consider, that sermons make a considerable branch of English literature, so that a library must be very imperfect if it has not a numerous collection of sermons:^a and in all collections,

^a Mr Wilkes probably did not know that there is in an English sermon the most comprehensive and lively account of that entertaining faculty, for which he himself is so much admired It is in Dr Barrow's first volume, and fourteenth sermon, "*Against foolish Talking and Jestings*" My old acquaintance, the late Corbyn Morris, in his ingenious "Essay on Wit, Humour, and Riddle," calls it "a *profuse* description

¹ Burke, from the late allusion to caution, as we have seen, was always "potatoes and whiskey" Boswell's exercised in regard to Mr Burke.

Sir, the desire of augmenting it grows stronger in proportion to the advance in acquisition; as motion is accelerated by the continuance of the impetus Besides, Sir, (looking at Mr. Wilkes with a placid but significant smile,) a man may collect sermons with intention of making himself better by them. I hope Mr. Beauclerk intended, that some time or other that should be the case with him "

Mr Wilkes said to me, loud enough for Dr Johnson to hear, " Dr Johnson should make me a present of his 'Lives of the

of Wit " but I do not see how it could be curtailed, without leaving out some good circumstance of discrimination As it is not generally known, and may perhaps dispose some to read sermons, from which they may receive real advantage, while looking only for entertainment, I shall here quote it

" But first (says the learned preacher) it may be demanded, what the thing we speak of is? Or what this fictitiousness (or *wit*, as he calls it before,) doth import? To which questions I might reply as Democritus did to him that asked the definition of a man, 'Tis that which we all see and know Any one better apprehends what it is by acquaintance, that I can inform him by description It is indeed, a thing so versatile and multiform appearing in so many shapes so many postures, so many garbs, so variously apprehended by several eyes and judgements, that it seemeth no less hard to settle a clear and certain notion thereof than to make a portrait of Proteus, or to define the figure of the fleeting air Sometimes it lieth in pat allusion to a known story, or in seasonable application of a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound sometimes it is wrapped in a dress of humorous expression sometimes it lurketh under an odd similitude sometimes it is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason in a shrewd intimation in cunningly diverting or cleverly retorting an objection sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyperbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or in acute nonsense sometimes a scenic representation of persons or things, a counterfeit speech, a mimical look or gesture passeth for it sometimes an affected simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous bluntness giveth it being sometimes it riseth only from a lucky hitting upon what is strange sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to the purpose Often it consisteth in one knows not what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how Its ways are unaccountable, and inexplicable being answerable to the numberless roivings of fancy, and windings of language It is, in short, a manner of speaking out of the simple and plain way, (such as reason teacheth and proveth things by,) which by a pretty surprizing uncouthness in conceit or expression, doth affect and amuse the fancy, stirring in it some wonder, and breeding some delight thereto It raiseth admiration, as signifying a nimble sagacity of apprehension a special felicity of invention, a vivacity of spirit, and reach of wit more than vulgar, it seeming to argue a rare quickness of parts, that one can fetch in remote conceits applicable, a notable skill that he can dexterously accommodate them to the purpose before him, together with a lively briskness of humour, not apt to damp those sportful flashes of imagination (Whence in Aristotle such persons are termed *εὐρίνοιοι*, dexterous men, and *εὐρυστοι*, men of facile or versatile manners, who can easily turn themselves to all things, or turn all things to themselves) It also procureth delight, by gratifying curiosity with its rareness, as semblance of difficulty (as monsters, not for their beauty, but their rarity, as juggling tricks, not for their use, but their abstruseness, are beheld with pleasure) by diverting the mind from its road of serious thoughts, by instilling gaiety and airiness of spirit, by provoking to such dispositions of spirit in way of emulation or complaisance, and by seasoning matters, otherwise dustasteful or impid, with an unusual and thence glorious tang "

Cor et Ad — Line 38 of note For "*εὐρυστοι*" read "*εὐρίνοιοι*"

Poets,' as I am a poor patriot who cannot afford to buy them." Johnson seemed to take no notice of this hint, but in a little while, he called to Mr Dilly, "Pray, Sir, be so good as to send a set of my Lives to Mr Wilkes, with my compliments." This was accordingly done; and Mr. Wilkes paid Dr Johnson a visit, was courteously received, and sate with him a long time

The company gradually dropped away Mr. Dilly himself was called down stairs upon business; I left the room for some time; when I returned, I was struck with observing Dr. Samuel Johnson and John Wilkes, Esq literally *tête à tête*; for they were reclined upon their chairs, with their heads leaning almost close to each other, and talking earnestly, in a kind of confidential whisper, of the personal quarrel between George the Second and the King of Prussia. Such a scene of perfectly easy sociality between two such opponents in the war of political controversy, as that which I now beheld, would have been an excellent subject for a picture It presented to my mind the happy days which are foretold in Scripture, when the lion shall lye down with the kid *

After this day there was another pretty long interval, during which Dr. Johnson and I did not meet When I mentioned it to him with regret, he was pleased to say, "Then, Sir, let us live double"

About this time it was much the fashion for several ladies to have evening assemblies, where the fair sex might participate in conversation with literary and ingenious men, animated by a desire to please. These societies were denominated *Blue-stocking Clubs*, the origin of which title being little known, it may be worth while to relate it. One of the most eminent members of those societies, when they first commenced, was Mr Stillingfleet, whose dress was remarkably grave, and in particular it was observed, that he wore blue-stockings Such was the excellence of his conversation, that his absence was felt as so great a loss, that it used to be said, "We can do nothing without the *blue-stockings*," and thus by degrees the title was established.¹ Miss Hannah More has admirably described a *Blue-stocking Club*, in her "*Bas Bleu*," a poem in which

* When I mentioned this to the Bishop of Killaloe, "With the *goats*," said his Lordship Such, however, is the engaging politeness and pleasantry of Mr Wilkes, and such the social good humour of the Bishop, that when they dined together at Mr Dilly's, where I also was, they were mutually agreeable

¹ Mr Hayward, however, has seen an account, by Lady Crewe, in which another origin of the term is given. A Madame de Polignac presented herself at Mrs.

Montagu's "Club" arrayed in blue stockings, which were then the rage at Paris. Mrs Greville and the other ladies then adopted the fashion.

many of the persons who were most conspicuous there are mentioned.

Johnson was prevailed with to come sometimes into these circles, and did not think himself too grave even for the lively Miss Monckton (now Countess of Corke) who used to have the finest *bit of blue* at the house of her mother, Lady Galway.¹ Her vivacity enchanted the Sage, and they used to talk together with all imaginable ease. A singular instance happened one evening, when she insisted that some of Sterne's writings were very pathetic. Johnson bluntly denied it. "I am sure (said she) they have affected *me*."—"Why (said Johnson, smiling, and rolling himself about) that is, because, dearest, you're a dunce." When she some time afterwards mentioned this to him, he said with equal truth and politeness, "Madam, if I had thought so, I certainly should not have said it."

Another evening Johnson's kind indulgence towards me had a pretty difficult trial. I had dined at the Duke of Montrose's, with a very agreeable party, and his Grace, according to his usual custom, had circulated the bottle very freely. Lord Graham and I went together to Miss Monckton's, where I certainly was in extraordinary spirits, and above all fear or awe. In the midst of a great number of persons of the first rank, amongst whom I recollect with confusion, a noble lady of the most stately decorum, I placed myself next to Johnson, and thinking myself now fully his match, talked to him in a loud and boisterous manner, desirous to let the company know how I could contend with *Ajax*. I particularly remember pressing him upon the value of the pleasures of the imagination, and as an illustration of my argument, asking him, "What, Sir, supposing I were to fancy that the (naming the most charming Duchess in his Majesty's dominions)² were in love with me, should I not be very happy?" My friend with much address evaded my interrogatories, and kept me as quiet as possible, but it may easily be conceived how he must have felt. When a few

Second Edition—Line 28 "That the" altered to "that the ———"

^a Next day I endeavoured to give what had happened the most ingenious turn I could, by the following verses

To the Honourable Miss MONCKTON.
Not that with th' excellent Montrose
I had the happiness to dine,
Not that I late from table rose,
From Graham's wit, from generous wine,

¹ This wonderful old lady was alive in 1840. Mr Croker, who was acquainted with her, has a very pleasant note on the subject. Mr Jekyll exercised his wit on her declaring that she was like a

shuttlecock, "all cork and feathers"—See also a pleasant sketch of her in Leslie's "Autobiography"

² No doubt the Duchess of Gordon.

days afterwards I waited upon him and made an apology, he behaved with the most friendly gentleness.

While I remained in London this year, Johnson and I dined together at several places. I recollect a placid day at Dr. Butters's, who was now removed from Derby to Lower Grosvenor-street, London, but of his conversation on that and other occasions during this period, I neglected to keep any regular record, and shall therefore insert here some miscellaneous articles which I find in my Johnsonian notes

His disorderly habits, when "making provision for the day that was passing over him," appear from the following anecdote, communicated to me by Mr John Nichols—"In the year 1763, a young bookseller, who was an apprentice to Mr Whiston, waited on him with a subscription to his 'Shakspeare,' and observing that the Doctor made no entry in any book of the subscriber's name, ventured diffidently to ask, whether he would please to have the gentleman's address, that it might be properly inserted in the printed list of subscribers.—'I shall print no List of Subscribers,' said Johnson, with great abruptness. but almost immediately recollecting himself, added, very complacently, 'Sir, I have two very cogent reasons for not printing any list of subscribers—one, that I have lost all the names—the other, that I have spent all the money.'"

Johnson could not brook appearing to be worsted in argument, even when he had taken the wrong side, to shew the force and dexterity of his talents. When, therefore, he perceived that his opponent gained ground, he had recourse to some sudden mode of robust sophistry. Once when I was pressing upon him with visible advantage, he stopped me thus.—"My dear Boswell, let's have no

It was not these alone which led
On sacred manners to encroach;
And made me feel what most I dread,
JOHNSON'S just frown, and self-reproach.
But when I enter'd, not abash'd,
From your bright eyes were shot such rays,
At once intoxication flash'd,
And all my frame was in a blaze!
But not a brilliant blaze I own,
Of the dull smok I'm yet asham'd;
I was a dreary ruin grown,
And not enlighten'd though inflam'd.
Victim at once to wine and love,
I hope, MARIA, you'll forgive,
While I invoke the powers above,
That henceforth I may wiser live

The lady was generously forgiving, returned me an obliging answer, and I thus obtained an *Act of Oblivion*, and took care never to offend again.

more of this ; you'll make nothing of it. I'd rather have you whistle a Scotch tune "

Care, however, must be taken to distinguish between Johnson when he "talked for victory," and Johnson when he had no desire but to inform and illustrate.—"One of Johnson's principal talents (says an eminent friend) was shewn in maintaining the wrong side of an argument, and in a splendid perversion of the truth —If you could contrive to have his fair opinion on a subject, and without any bias from personal prejudice, or from a wish to be victorious in argument, it was wisdom itself, not only convincing, but overpowering."

He had, however, all his life habituated himself to consider conversation as a trial of intellectual vigour and skill, and to this, I think, we may venture to ascribe that unexampled richness and brilliancy which appeared in his own. As a proof at once of his eagerness for colloquial distinction, and his high notion of this eminent friend, he once addressed him thus "———,¹ we now have been several hours together, and you have said but one thing for which I envied you."

He disliked much all speculative desponding considerations, which tended to discourage men from diligence and exertion. He was in this like Dr Shaw, the great traveller, who, Mr. Daines Barrington told me, used to say, "I hate a *cui bono* man" Upon being asked by a friend what he should think of one who was apt to say, *non est tanti*,—"That he's a stupid fellow, Sir. (answered Johnson) What would these *tanti* men be doing the while?" When I, in a low-spirited fit, was talking to him with indifference of the pursuits which generally engage us in a course of action, and inquiring a *reason* for taking so much trouble, "Sir, (said he, in an animated tone,) it is driving on the system of life "

He told me, that he was glad that I had, by General Oglethorpe's means, become acquainted with Dr Shebbeare. Indeed that gentleman, whatever objections were made to him, had knowledge and abilities much above the class of ordinary writers, and deserves to be remembered as a respectable name in literature, were it only for his admirable "Letters on the English Nation," under the name of "Battista Angeloni, a Jesuit."

Johnson and Shebbeare,² were frequently named together, as having in former reigns had no predilection for the family of

¹ I recollect a ludicrous paragraph in the news-papers, that the King had pensioned both a *Ho*-bear and a *Sko*-bear

² Mr. Gerard Hamilton, as Malone supposes.

Hanover The authour of the celebrated "Heroick Epistle to Sir William Chambers," introduces them in one line, in a list of those who "tasted the sweets of his present Majesty's reign." Such was Johnson's fair taste of the merit of that satire, that he allowed Dr Goldsmith, as he told me, to read it to him from beginning to end, and did not refuse his praise to its execution.

Goldsmith could sometimes take adventurous liberties with him, and escape unpunished. Beauclerk told me that when Goldsmith talked of a project for having a third Theatre in London, solely for the exhibition of new plays, in order to deliver authours from the supposed tyranny of managers, Johnson treated it slightly; upon which Goldsmith said, "Aye, aye, this may be nothing to you, who can now shelter yourself behind the corner of a pension;" and that Johnson bore this with good-humour.

Johnson praised the Earl of Carlisle's Poems, which his Lordship had published with his name, as not disdaining to be a candidate for literary fame. My friend was of opinion, that when a man of rank appeared in that character, he deserved to have his merit handsomely allowed.* In this I think he was more liberal than Mr. William Whitehead, in his "Elegy to Lord Villiers," in which under the pretext of "superiour toils, demanding all their care," he discovers a jealousy of the great paying their court to the Muses

* Men of rank and fortune however should be pretty well assured of having a real claim to the approbation of the publick as writers, before they venture to stand forth. Dryden in his Preface to "All for Love," thus expresses himself

"Men of pleasant conversation (at least esteemed so) and endued with a trifling kind of fancy, perhaps helped out by a smattering of Latin, are ambitious to distinguish themselves from the herd of gentlemen, by their poetry

*'Rarus enim fermè sensus communis illi
Fortunâ.'*

And is not this a wretched affectation, not to be contented with what fortune has done for them, and sit down quietly with their estates, but they must call their wits in question, and needlessly expose their nakedness to publick view? Not considering that they are not to expect the same approbation from sober men, which they have found from their flatterers after the third bottle. If a little glittering in discourse has passed them on us for witty men, where was the necessity of undeceiving the world? Would a man who has an ill title to an estate, but yet is in possession of it, would he bring it of his own accord to be tried at Westminster? We who write, if we want the talents, yet have the excuse that we do it for a poor subsistence, but what can be urged in their defence, who not having the vocation of poverty to scribble, out of mere wantonness take pains to make themselves ridiculous? Horace was certainly in the right where he said, 'That no man is satisfied with his own condition.' A Poet is not pleased, because he is not rich, and the rich are discontented because the poets will not admit them of their number."

Erratum.—In the note, for "*communis illi*" read "*communis in illa*."

“ ————— To the chosen few
 Who dare excel, thy fostering aid afford,
 Their arts, their magick powers, with honours due
 Exalt;—but be thyself what they record.”

Johnson had called twice on the Bishop of Killaloe before his Lordship set out for Ireland, having missed him the first time. He said, “It would have hung heavy on my heart if I had not seen him. No man ever paid more attention to another than he has done to me,” and I have neglected him, not wil-

“ This gave me a very great pleasure, for there had been once a pretty smart altercation between Dr. Barnard and him, upon a question, whether a man could improve himself after the age of forty-five, when Johnson in a hasty humour, expressed himself in a manner not quite civil. Dr. Barnard made it the subject of a copy of pleasant verses, in which he supposed himself to learn different perfections from different men. They concluded with delicate irony

“ Johnson shall teach me how to place,
 In fairest light each borrow'd grace,
 From him I'll learn to write
 Copy his clear familiar style,
 And by the roughness of his file,
 Grow—like himself—polite.”¹

I know not if Johnson ever saw the Poem, but I had occasion to find that as Dr. Barnard and he knew each other better, their mutual regard increased
Cor et Ad—Last line but one of note For “if” read “whether”

¹ Mr. Croker quotes the whole of this poem from Miss Reynolds's “Recollections,” which he was privileged to use, together with a fuller version of the little altercation. It exhibits Johnson in a charming light.

“I shall never forget with what regret he spoke of the rude reply he made to Dr. Barnard, on his saying that men never improved after the age of forty-five. ‘That's not true, Sir,’ said Johnson. ‘You, who perhaps are forty-eight, may still improve if you will try. I wish you would set about it, and I am afraid,’ he added, ‘there is great room for it,’ and thus was said in rather a large party of ladies and gentlemen at dinner. Soon after the ladies withdrew from the table, Dr. Johnson followed them, and sitting down by the lady of the house, he said, ‘I am very sorry for having spoken so rudely to the dean.’ ‘You very well may, Sir.’ ‘Yes,’ he said, ‘it was highly improper to speak in that style to a minister of the Gospel, and I am the more hurt on reflecting with what mild dignity he received it.’ When the Dean came up into the drawing-room, Dr. Johnson immediately rose from his seat, and made him sit on the sofa by him, and with such a beseeching

look for pardon, and with such fond gestures—literally smoothing down his arms and his knees—tokens of penitence, which were so graciously received by the Dean as to make Dr. Johnson very happy, and not a little added to the esteem and respect he had previously entertained for his character.

“The next morning the Dean called on Sir Joshua Reynolds with the following verses—

“ ‘I lately thought no man alive
 Could ever improve past forty-five,
 And ventured to assert it
 The observation was not new,
 But seemed to me so just and true
 That none could controvert it

“ ‘No, Sir,” says Johnson, “’tis not so,
 ’Tis your mistake, and I can shew
 An instance if you doubt it.
 You, who perhaps are forty-eight,
 May still improve,—’tis not too late—
 I wish you’d set about it.”

“ ‘Encouraged thus to mend my faults,
 I turned his counsel in my thoughts
 Which way I could apply it,

fully, but from being otherwise occupied. Always, Sir, set a high value on spontaneous kindness. He, whose inclination prompts him to cultivate your friendship of his own accord, will love you more than one whom you have been at pains to attach to you."

Johnson told me, that he was once much pleased to find that a carpenter, who lived near him, was very ready to shew him some things in his business which he wished to see "It was paying (said he) respect to literature"

I asked him if he was not dissatisfied with having so small a share of wealth, and none of those distinctions in the state which are the objects of ambition. He had only a pension of three hundred a year. Why was he not in such circumstances as to keep his coach? Why had he not some considerable office? JOHNSON "Sir, I have never complained of the world, nor do I think that I have reason to complain. It is rather to be wondered at that I have so much. My pension is more out of the usual course of things than any instance that I have known. Here, Sir, was a man avowedly no friend to the Government at the time, gets a pension without asking for it. I never courted the great, they sent for me: but I think they

Cor et Ad—Line 20 After "time" read "who," and for "gets" read "got"

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| <p>Genius I knew was past my reach,
For who can learn what none can
teach?
And wit—I could not buy it</p> <p>"Then come, my friends, and try your
skill,
You may improve me if you will,
(My books are at a distance),
With you I'll live and learn, and
then
Instead of books I shall read men,
So lend me your assistance</p> <p>"Dear knight of Plympton, teach me
how
To suffer, with unclouded brow
And smile serene as thine,
The jest uncouth and truth severe,
Like thee to turn my deafest ear,
And calmly drink my wine</p> <p>"Thou say'st not only skill is gain'd,
But genius, too, may be attain'd,
By studious invitation,
Thy temper mild, thy genius fine,
I'll study till I make them mine
By constant meditation</p> | <p>"Thy art of pleasing teach me, Garrick,
Thou who reverest odes Pindarick
A second time read o'er,
Oh! could we read <i>these</i> backwards
too,
Past thirty years thou shouldst re-
view,
And charm us thirty more</p> <p>"If I have thoughts and can't express
'em,
Gibbon shall teach me how to dress 'em
In terms select and terse,
Jones teach me modesty and Greek,
Smith, how to think, Burke, how to
speak,
And Beauclerk to converse</p> <p>"Let Johnson teach me how to place
In fairest light each borrow'd grace,
From him I'll learn to write
Copy his free and easy style,
And from the roughness of his file
Grow, like himself, polite"</p> |
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Mr Boswell's version of the last line but one of the last stanza is probably the right one, as "from" had been used two lines before

now give me up They are satisfied. They have seen enough of me." Upon my observing that I could not believe this, for they must certainly be highly pleased by his conversation, conscious of his own superiority, he answered, "No, Sir, great Lords and great Ladies don't love to have their mouths stopped" This was very expressive of the effect which the force of his understanding and brilliancy of his fancy could not but produce; and, to be sure, they must have found themselves strangely diminished in his company When I warmly declared how happy I was at all times to hear him,—“Yes, Sir (said he) But if you were Lord Chancellor, it would not be so you would then consider your own dignity.”

There was much truth and knowledge of human nature in this remark. But certainly one should think, that in whatever elevated state of life a man who *knew* the value of the conversation of Johnson might be placed, though he might prudently avoid a situation in which he might appear lessened by comparison, yet he would frequently gratify himself in private with the participation of the rich intellectual entertainment which Johnson could furnish Strange, however, it is, to consider how few of the great sought his society, so that if one were disposed to take occasion for satire on that account, very conspicuous objects present themselves His noble friend, Lord Elibank, well observed, that if a great man procured an interview with Johnson, and did not wish to see him more, it shewed a mere idle curiosity, and a wretched want of relish for extraordinary powers of mind Mrs. Thrale justly and wittily accounted for such conduct by saying, that Johnson's conversation was by much too strong for a person accustomed to obsequiousness and flattery, it was *mustard in a young child's mouth*!

One day, when I told him that I was a zealous Tory,¹ but not enough “according to knowledge,” and should be obliged to him for “a reason,” he was so candid, and expressed himself so well, that I begged of him to repeat what he had said, and I wrote down as follows

Of Tory and Whig.

“A wise Tory and a wise Whig, I believe, will agree Their principles are the same, though their modes of thinking are

¹ “I can drink, I can laugh, I can converse in perfect good humour with Whigs, with Republicans, with Dissenters with Independents, with Quakers, with Moravians, with Jews They can

do me no harm My mind is made up My principles are fixed But I would vote with Tories and pray with a Dean and Chapter”—*Letter to the People of Scotland*

different. A high Tory makes Government unintelligible: it is lost in the clouds. A violent Whig makes it impracticable: he is for allowing so much liberty to every man, that there is not power enough to govern any man. The prejudice of the Tory is for establishment the prejudice of the Whig is for innovation. A Tory does not wish to give more real power to Government, but that Government should have more reverence. Then they differ as to the Church. The Tory is not for giving more legal power to the Clergy, but wishes they should have a considerable influence, founded on the opinion of mankind. the Whig is for limiting and watching them with a narrow jealousy."

On Saturday, June 2, I set out for Scotland, and had engaged, as I sometimes did, to pay a visit, in my way, at Southill, in Bedfordshire, at the hospitable mansion of 'Squire Dilly, the elder brother of my worthy friends the booksellers in the Poultry. Dr Johnson agreed to be of the party this year, with Mr Charles Dilly and me, and to go and see Lord Bute's seat at Luton Hoe. He talked little to us in the carriage, being chiefly occupied in reading Dr Watson's second volume of "Chemical Essays," which he liked very well, and his own "Prince of Abyssinia," on which he seemed to be intensely fixed, having told us, that he had not looked at it since it was first published. I happened to take it out of my pocket to-day, and he seized upon it with avidity. He pointed out to me the following remarkable passage. "By what means (said the Prince) are the Europeans thus powerful, or why, since they can so easily visit Asia and Africa for trade or conquest, cannot the Asiatics and Africans invade their coasts, plant colonies in their ports, and give laws

Cor et Ad —After line 11, read —

"TO MR PERKINS

"SIR,—However often I have seen you, I have hitherto forgotten the note, but I have now sent it with my good wishes for the prosperity of you and your partner," of whom, from our short conversation, I could not judge otherwise than favourably.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"June 2, 1781"

"SAM JOHNSON

* Mr Barclay, a descendant of Robert Barclay, of Ury, the celebrated apologist of the people called Quakers, and remarkable for maintaining the principles of his venerable progenitor, with as much of the elegance of modern manners as is consistent with primitive simplicity

Cor et Ad —Line 19 On "Watson's" put the following note —"Now Bishop of Llandaff, one of the poorest Bishopricks in this Kingdom. His Lordship has written with much zeal to shew the propriety of *equalising* the revenues of Bishops. He has informed us that he has burnt all his Chemical papers. The friends of our excellent constitution, now assailed on every side by innovators and levellers, would have less regretted the suppression of some of his Lordship's other writings."

to their natural princes? The same wind that carries them back would bring us hither"—“They are more powerful, Sir, than we, (answered Imlac,) because they are wiser. Knowledge will always predominate over ignorance, as man governs the other animals. But why their knowledge is more than ours, I know not what reason can be given, but the unsearchable will of the Supreme Being” He said, “This, Sir, no man can explain otherwise.”

We stopped at Welwyn, where I wished much to see, in company with Dr. Johnson, the residence of the authour of “Night Thoughts,” which was then possessed by his son, Mr. Young. Here some address was requisite, for I was not acquainted with Mr. Young, and had I proposed to Dr. Johnson that we should send to him, he would have checked my wish, and perhaps been offended. I therefore concerted with Mr. Dilly, that I should steal away from Dr. Johnson and him, and try what reception I could procure from Mr. Young, if unfavourable nothing was to be said, but if agreeable I should return and notify it to them. I hastened to Mr. Young’s, found he was at home, sent in word that a gentleman desired to wait upon him, and was shewn into a parlour, where he and a young lady, his daughter, were sitting. He appeared to be a plain, civil, country gentleman; and when I begged pardon for presuming to trouble him, but said I wished much to see his place, if he would give me leave, he behaved very courteously, and answered, “By all means, Sir, we are just going to drink tea; will you sit down?” I thanked him, but said, that Dr. Johnson had come with me from London, and I must return to the inn and drink tea with him; that my name was Boswell, I had travelled with him in the Hebrides. “Sir (said he) I should think it a great honour to see Dr. Johnson here. Will you allow me to send for him?” Availing myself of this opening, I said that “I would go myself and bring him, when he had drunk tea, he knew nothing of my calling here.” Having been thus successful, I hastened back to the inn, and informed Dr. Johnson that “Mr. Young, son of Dr. Young, the authour of ‘Night Thoughts,’ whom I had just left, desired to have the honour of seeing him at the house where his father lived.” Dr. Johnson luckily made no inquiry how this invitation had arisen, but agreed to go, and when we entered Mr. Young’s parlour, he addressed him with a very polite bow, “Sir, I had a curiosity to come and see this place. I had the honour to know that great man, your father.” We went into the garden, where we found

a gravel walk, on each side of which was a row of trees, planted by Dr Young, which formed a handsome Gothick arch, Dr Johnson called it a fine grove. I beheld it with reverence.

We sat some time in the summer-house, on the outside wall of which was inscribed, "*Ambulantes in horto audiebant vocem Dei.*" And in reference to a brook by which it is situated, "*Vivendi rectè qui prorogat horam, &c.*" I said to Mr. Young, that I had been told his father was cheerful. "Sir, (said he,) he was too well-bred a man not to be cheerful in company, but he was gloomy when alone. He never was cheerful after my mother's death, and he had met with many disappointments." Dr. Johnson observed to me afterwards, "That this was no favourable account of Dr. Young; for it is not becoming in a man to have so little acquiescence in the ways of Providence, as to be gloomy because he has not obtained as much preferment as he expected, nor to continue gloomy for the loss of his wife. Grief has its time." The last part of this censure was theoretically made. Practically, we know that grief for the loss of a wife may be continued very long, in proportion as affection has been sincere. No man knew this better than Dr. Johnson.

We went into the church, and looked at the monument erected by Mr. Young, to his father. Mr. Young mentioned an anecdote, that his father had received several thousand pounds of subscription-money for his "*Universal Passion*," but had lost it in the South-Sea. Dr Johnson thought this must be a mistake; for he had never seen a subscription-book.

Upon the road we talked of the uncertainty of profit with which authours and booksellers engage in the publication of literary works. JOHNSON "My judgement I have found is no certain rule as to the sale of a book." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, have you been much plagued with authours sending you their works to revise?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir, I have been thought a sour surly fellow." BOSWELL. "Very lucky for you, Sir—in that respect." I must however observe, that notwithstanding what he now said, which he no doubt imagined at the time to be the fact, there was, perhaps, no man who more frequently yielded to the solicitations even of very obscure authours, to read their manuscripts, or more liberally assisted them with advice and correction.

He found himself very happy at Mr Dilly's, where there is always abundance of excellent fare and hearty welcome.

On Sunday, June 3, we all went to Southill church, which is very near to Mr. Dilly's house. It being the first Sunday of the month, the holy sacrament was administered, and I staid to partake of it. When I came afterwards into Dr. Johnson's room, he said, "You

did right to stay and receive the communion, I had not thought of it." This seemed to imply that he did not choose to approach the altar without a previous preparation, as to which good men entertain different opinions, some holding that it is irreverent to partake of that ordinance without considerable premeditation; others, that whoever is a sincere Christian, and in a proper frame to discharge any other ritual duty of our religion, may, without scruple, discharge this most solemn one. A middle notion I believe to be the just one, which is, that communicants need not think a long train of preparatory forms indispensably necessary, but neither should they rashly and lightly venture upon so awful and mysterious an institution. Christians must judge each for himself, what degree of retirement and self-examination is necessary upon each occasion.

Being in a frame, which, I hope for the felicity of human nature, many experience—in fine weather—at the country-house of a friend—consoled and elevated by pious exercises—I expressed myself with an unrestrained fervour to my "Guide, Philosopher, and Friend," "My dear Sir, I would fain be a good man, and I am very good now. I fear God, and honour the King, I wish to do no ill, and to be benevolent to all mankind." He looked at me with a benignant indulgence, but took occasion to give me able and salutary caution. "Do not, Sir, accustom yourself to trust to *impressions*. There is a middle state of mind between conviction and hypocrisy, of which many are conscious. By trusting to impressions, a man may gradually come to yield to them, and at length be subject to them, so as not to be a free agent, or what is the same thing in effect, to *suppose* that he is not a free agent. A man who is in that state, should not be suffered to live; if he declares he cannot help acting in a particular way, but is irresistibly impelled, there can be no confidence in him, no more than in a tyger. But, Sir, no man believes himself to be impelled irresistibly, we know that he who says he believes it, lies. Favourable impressions at particular moments, as to the state of our souls, may be deceitful and dangerous. In general no man can be sure of his acceptance with God; some, indeed, may have had it revealed to them. St. Paul, who wrought miracles, may have had a miracle wrought on himself, and may have obtained supernatural assurance of pardon, and mercy, and beatitude, yet St. Paul, though he expresses strong hope, also expresses fear, lest having preached to others, he himself should be a cast-away."

The opinion of a learned Bishop of our acquaintance, as to there being merit in religious faith, being mentioned JOHNSON. "Why, yes, Sir, the most licentious man, were hell open before him, would

not take the most beautiful strumpet to his arms. We must, as the Apostle says, live by faith, not by sight."

I talked to him of original sin,* in consequence of the fall of man, and of the atonement made by our SAVIOUR. After some conversation, which he desired me to remember, he at my request dictated to me as follows.

"WITH respect to original sin, the inquiry is not necessary, for whatever is the cause of human corruption, men are evidently and confessedly corrupt, that all the laws of heaven and earth are insufficient to restrain them from crimes

"Whatever difficulty there may be in the conception of vicarious punishments, it is an opinion which has had possession of mankind in all ages. There is no nation that has not used the practice of sacrifices. Whoever, therefore, denies the propriety of vicarious punishments, holds an opinion which the sentiments and practice of mankind have contradicted, from the beginning of the world. The great sacrifice for the sins of mankind was offered at the death of the MESSIAH, who is called in scripture, 'The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.' To judge of the reasonableness of the scheme of redemption, it must be considered as necessary to the government of the universe, that God should make known his perpetual and irreconcilable detestation of moral evil. He might indeed punish, and punish only the offenders. but as the end of punishment is not revenge of crimes, but propagation of virtue, it was more becoming the divine clemency to find another manner of proceeding, less destructive to man, and at least equally powerful to promote goodness. The end of punishment is to reclaim and warn. That punishment will both reclaim and warn, which shews evidently such abhorrence of sin in God, as may deter us from it, or strike us with dread of vengeance when we have committed it. This is effected by vicarious punishment. Nothing could more testify the opposition between the nature of God and moral evil, or more amply display his justice, to men and angels, to all orders and successions of beings, than that it was necessary for the highest and purest nature, even for DIVINITY itself, to pacify the demands of

* Dr. Ogden, in his second sermon "On the Articles of the Christian Faith," with admirable acuteness thus addresses the opposers of that doctrine, which accounts for the confusion, sin, and misery, which we find in this life. "It would be severe in God, you think, to *degrade* us to such a sad state as this, for the offence of our first parents, but you can allow him to *place* us in it, without any inducement. Are our calamities lessened for not being ascribed to Adam? If your condition be unhappy, is it not still unhappy, whatever was the occasion? With the aggravation of this reflection, that if it was as good as it was at first designed, there seems to be somewhat the less reason to look for its amendment."

vengeance, by a painful death ; of which the natural effect would be, that when justice is appeased, there is a proper place for the exercise of mercy ; and that such propitiation shall supply, in some degree, the imperfections of our obedience, and the inefficacy of our repentance. For, obedience and repentance, such as we can perform, are still necessary. Our SAVIOUR has told us, that he did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil : to fulfil the typical law, by the performance of what those types had foreshewn ; and the moral law, by precepts of greater purity and higher exaltation "

[Here he said, " God bless you with it." I acknowledged myself much obliged to him , but I begged that he would go on as to the propitiation being the chief object of our most holy faith. He then dictated this one other paragraph]

" The peculiar doctrine of Christianity is, that of an universal sacrifice, and perpetual propitiation. Other prophets only proclaimed the will and the threatenings of GOD. CHRIST satisfied his justice "

The Reverend Mr. Palmer, Fellow of Queen's-College, Cambridge, dined with us. He expressed a wish that a better provision were made for parish-clerks. JOHNSON " Yes, Sir , a parish-clerk should be a man who is able to make a will, or write a letter for any body in the parish "

I mentioned Lord Monboddos notion that the ancient Egyptians, with all their learning, and all their arts, were not only black, but woolly-haired. Mr. Palmer asked how did it appear upon examining the mummies ? Dr. Johnson approved of this test

Although upon most occasions I never heard a more strenuous advocate for the advantages of wealth, than Dr. Johnson , he this day, I know not from what caprice, took the other side. " I have not observed (said he) that men of very large fortunes enjoy any

Third Edition, note on line 18—This unfortunate person, whose full name was Thomas Fysche Palmer, afterwards went to Dundee, in Scotland, where he officiated as minister to a congregation of the sect who call themselves *Unitarians*, from a notion that they distinctively worship ONE GOD, because they *deny* the mysterious doctrine of the TRINITY. They do not advert that the great body of the Christian Church in maintaining that mystery, maintain also the *Unity* of the GOD-HEAD the " TRINITY in UNITY"—three persons and ONE GOD " The Church humbly adores the DIVINITY as exhibited in the holy Scriptures. The Unitarian sect vainly presumes to comprehend and define the ALMIGHTY. Mr Palmer having heated his mind with political speculations, became so much dissatisfied with our excellent Constitution, as to compose, publish, and circulate writings, which were found to be so seditious and dangerous, that upon being found guilty by a Jury, the Court of Justiciary in Scotland sentenced him to transportation for fourteen years. A loud clamour against this sentence was made by some Members of both Houses of Parliament, but both Houses approved of it by a great majority ; and he was conveyed to the settlement for convicts in New South Wales—(Barwell or Malone)

thing extraordinary that makes happiness. What has the Duke of Bedford? What has the Duke of Devonshire? The only great instance that I have ever known of the enjoyment of wealth was, that of Jamaica Dawkins, who going to visit Palmyra, and hearing that the way was infested by robbers, hired a troop of Turkish horse to guard him."

Dr. Gibbons, the Dissenting minister, being mentioned, he said, "I took to Dr Gibbons." And addressing himself to Mr. Charles Dilly, added, "I shall be glad to see him. Tell him, if he'll call on me, and dawdle over a dish of tea in an afternoon, I shall take it kind."

The Reverend Mr Smith, Vicar of Southill, a very respectable man, with a very agreeable family, sent an invitation to us to drink tea. I remarked Dr. Johnson's very formal politeness. Though always fond of changing the scene, he said, "We must have Mr. Dilly's leave. We cannot go from your house, Sir, without your permission." We all went, and were well satisfied with our visit. I however remember nothing particular, except a nice distinction which Dr Johnson made with respect to the power of memory, maintaining that forgetfulness was a man's own fault. "To remember and to recollect (said he) are different things. A man has not the power to recollect what is not in his mind, but when a thing is in his mind he may remember it." The remark was occasioned by my leaning back on a chair, which a little before I had perceived to be broken, and pleading forgetfulness as an excuse. "Sir, (said he,) its being broken was certainly in your mind."

When I observed that a housebreaker was in general very timorous. JOHNSON. "No wonder, Sir, he is afraid of being shot getting *into* a house, or hanged when he has got *out* of it."

He told us, that he had in one day written six sheets of a translation from the French;¹ adding, "I should be glad to see it now. I wish that I had copies of all the pamphlets written against me, as it is said Pope had. Had I known that I should make so much noise in the world, I should have been at pains to collect them. I believe there is hardly a day in which there is not something about me in the news-papers."

On Monday, June 4, we all went to Luton-Hoe, to see Lord Bute's magnificent seat, for which I had obtained a ticket. As we entered the park, I talked in a high style of my old friendship with Lord Mountstuart, and said, "I shall probably be much at this

¹ This was, no doubt, the translation of Father Paul's history, of which just six sheets were printed off. The life, notes, &c., were from the French of Courayer.

place." The Sage, aware of human vicissitudes, gently checked me: "Don't you be too sure of that." He made two or three peculiar observations, as when shewn the botanical garden, "Is not *every* garden a botanical garden?" When told that there was a shrubbery to the extent of several miles; "That is making a very foolish use of the ground, a little of it is very well." When it was proposed that we should walk on the pleasure-ground, "Don't let us fatigue ourselves. Why should we walk there? Here's a fine tree, let's get to the top of it." But upon the whole, he was very much pleased. He said, "This is one of the places I do not regret having come to see. It is a very stately place, indeed, in the house magnificence is not sacrificed to convenience, nor convenience to magnificence. The library is very splendid, the dignity of the rooms is very great; and the quantity of pictures is beyond expectation, beyond hope."

It happened without any previous concert, that we visited the seat of Lord Bute upon the King's birth day, we dined and drank his Majesty's health at an inn, in the village of Luton

In the evening I put him in mind of his promise to favour me with a copy of his celebrated Letter to the Earl of Chesterfield,* and he was at last pleased to comply with this earnest request, by dictating it to me from his memory, for he believed that he himself had no copy. There was an animated glow in his countenance while he thus recalled his high minded indignation

He laughed heartily at a ludicrous action in the Court of Session, in which I was Counsel. The Society of *Procurators*, or Attornies, entitled to practice in the inferiour Courts at Edinburgh, had obtained a royal charter, in which they had taken care to have their ancient designation of *Procurators*, changed into that of *Solicitors*, from a notion, as they supposed, that it was more *genteel*, and this new title they displayed by a publick advertisement for a *General Meeting* at their *HALL*.

It has been said, that the Scottish nation is not distinguished for humour, and, indeed, what happened on this occasion may in some degree justify the remark. for although this society had contrived to make themselves a very prominent object for the ridicule of such as might stoop to it, the only joke that appeared was the following paragraph, sent as a card to the news-paper called "*The Caledonian Mercury*"

"A correspondent informs us, that the Worshipful Society of *Chaldeans*, *Cadies*, or *Running Stationers* of this city, are resolved, in imitation, and encouraged by the singular success of their

* See page 158 of Vol. I

brethren, of an *equally respectable* Society, to apply for a Charter of their Privileges, particularly of the sole privilege of *PROCURING*, in the most extensive sense of the word, exclusive of chairmen, porters, penny-post men, and other *inferiour* ranks; their bretheren the R—Y—L S—LL—RS, *alias* P—C—RS, *before the* INFERIOUR Courts of this City, always excepted

“Should the Worshipful Society be successful, they are farther resolved not to be *puffed up* thereby, but to demean themselves with more equanimity and decency than their *R-y-l, learned*, and *very modest* brethren above mentioned have done, upon their late dignification and exaltation ”

A majority of the members of the Society prosecuted Mr Robertson, the publisher of the paper, for damages, and the first judgement of the whole Court very wisely dismissed the action, *Solventur risu tabulæ, tu missus abibis*. But a new trial or review was granted upon a petition, according to the forms in Scotland. This petition I was engaged to answer, and Dr. Johnson, with great alacrity furnished to-night what follows

“All injury is either of the person, the fortune, or the fame. Now, it is a certain thing, it is proverbially known, that *a jest breaks no bones*. They never have gained half-a-crown less in the whole profession since this mischievous paragraph has appeared and, as to their reputation, What is their reputation but an instrument of getting money? If, therefore, they have lost no money, the question upon reputation may be answered by a very old position, *De minimis non curat Prætor*.

“Whether there was, or was not, an *animus injuriandi*, is not worth inquiring, if no *injuria* can be proved. But the truth is, there was no *animus injuriandi*. It was only an *animus irritandi*,* which, happening to be exercised upon a *genus irritabile*, produced unexpected violence of resentment. Their irritability arose only from an opinion of their own importance, and their delight in their new exaltation. What might have been borne by a *Procurator* could not be borne by a *Solicitor*. Your Lordships well know, that *honores mutant mores*. Titles and dignities play strongly upon the fancy. As a mad-man is apt to think himself grown suddenly great, so he that grows suddenly great is apt to borrow a little from the mad-man. To co-operate with their resentment would be to promote their phrenzy, nor is it possible to guess to what they might proceed, if to the new title of *Solicitor*, should be added the elation of victory and triumph

* Mr Robertson altered this word to *jocandi*, he having found in Blackstone that to *irritate* is actionable.

"We consider your Lordships as the protectors of our rights, and the guardians of our virtues, but believe it not included in your high office, that you should flatter our vices, or solace our vanity: and, as vanity only dictates this prosecution, it is humbly hoped your Lordships will dismiss it.

"If every attempt, however light or ludicrous, to lessen another's reputation, is to be punished by a judicial sentence, what punishment can be sufficiently severe for him who attempts to diminish the reputation of the Supreme Court of Justice, by reclaiming upon a cause already determined, without any change in the state of the question? Does it not imply hopes that the Judges will change their opinion? Is not uncertainty and inconstancy in the highest degree disreputable to a Court? Does it not suppose, that the former judgement was temerarious or negligent? Does it not lessen the confidence of the publick? Will it not be said, that *jus est aut incognitum, aut vagum?* and will not the consequence be drawn, *misera est servitus?* Will not the rules of action be obscure? Will not he who knows himself wrong to-day, hope that the Courts of Justice will think him right to-morrow? Surely, my Lords, these are attempts of dangerous tendency, which the Solicitors, as men versed in the law, should have foreseen and avoided. It was natural for an ignorant printer to appeal from the Lord Ordinary; but from lawyers, the descendents of lawyers, who have practised for three hundred years, and have now raised themselves to a higher denomination, it might be expected, that they should know the reverence due to a judicial determination, and, having been once dismissed, should sit down in silence."

I am ashamed to mention, that the Court, by a plurality of voices, without having a single additional circumstance before them, reversed their own judgement, made a serious matter of this dull and foolish joke, and adjudged Mr Robertson to pay to the Society five pounds (sterling money) and costs of suit. The decision will seem strange to English lawyers.

On Tuesday, June 5, Johnson was to return to London. He was very pleasant at breakfast; I mentioned a friend of mine having resolved never to marry a pretty woman. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is a very foolish resolution to resolve not to marry a pretty woman. Beauty is of itself very estimable. No, Sir, I would prefer a pretty woman, unless there are objections to her. A pretty woman may be foolish; a pretty woman may be wicked; a pretty woman may not like me. But there is no such danger in marrying a pretty woman as is apprehended, she will not be persecuted if she does

not invite persecution. A pretty woman, if she has a mind to be wicked, can find a readier way than another, and that is all."

I accompanied him in Mr. Dilly's chaise to Shefford, where talking of Lord Bute's never going to Scotland, he said, "As an Englishman, I should wish all the Scotch gentlemen to be educated in England; Scotland would become a province, they would spend all their rents in England." This is a subject of much consequence, and much delicacy. The advantage of an English education is unquestionably very great to Scotch gentlemen of talents and ambition, and regular visits, and I should think other means, might be effectually used to prevent them from being totally estranged from their native country, any more than a Cumberland or Northumberland gentleman, who has been educated in the South of England. I own, indeed, that it is no small misfortune for Scotch gentlemen, who have neither talents nor ambition, to be educated in England, where they may be perhaps distinguished only by a nick-name, lavish their fortune in giving expensive entertainments to those who laugh at them, and saunter about as mere idle insignificant hangers on even upon the foolish great, when if they had been judiciously brought up at home, they might have been comfortable and creditable members of society.

At Shefford, I had another affectionate parting from my revered friend, who was taken up by the Bedford coach, and carried to the metropolis.¹ I went with Messieurs Dilly, to see some friends at Bedford, dined with the officers of the militia of the county, and next day proceeded on my journey.

To BENNET LANGTON, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—How welcome your account of yourself and your invitation to your new house was to me, I need not tell you, who consider our friendship not only as formed by choice, but as matured by time. We have been now long enough acquainted to have many images in common, and, therefore, to have a source of conversation which neither the learning nor the wit of a new companion can supply.

"My Lives are now published; and if you will tell me whither I shall send them that they may come to you, I will take care that you shall not be without them.

Cor. et Ad—Line 10 After "visits" read "to Scotland" *Dele* "I should think," and read "perhaps"

¹ This was one of the last of the pleasant jaunts that Johnson and his faithful friend were to enjoy together

The sage's health now began to fail, and his ailments took away all relish for such agreeable junketting.

"You will, perhaps, be glad to hear,¹ that Mrs Thrale is disincumbred of her brewhouse, and that it seemed to the purchaser so far from an evil, that he was content to give for it an hundred and thirty five thousand pounds. Is the nation ruined?

"Please to make my respectful compliments to Lady Rothes, and keep me in the memory of all the little dear family, particularly pretty Mrs Jane. I am, Sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"Bolt court, June 16, 1781 "

To THOMAS ASTLE, Esq.

"SIR,—I am ashamed that you have been forced to call so often for your books, but it has been by no fault on either side. They have never been out of my hands, nor have I ever been at home

Cor et Ad—After the letter to Mr Langton read—"Johnson's charity to the poor was uniform and extensive, both from inclination and principle. He not only bestowed liberally out of his own purse, but what is more difficult as well as rare, would beg from others, when he had proper objects in view. This he did judiciously as well as humanely. Mr Philip Metcalfe tells me, that when he has asked him for some money for persons in distress, and Mr Metcalfe has offered what Johnson thought too much, he insisted on taking less, saying, 'No, no, Sir, we must not pamper them'."

"I am indebted to Mr Malone, one of Sir Joshua Reynolds's executors, for the following note, which was found among his papers after his death, and which, we may presume, his unaffected modesty prevented him from communicating to me with the other letters from Dr Johnson with which he was pleased to furnish me. However slight in itself, as it does honour to that illustrious painter, and most amiable man, I am happy to introduce it —

' TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

"DEAR SIR —It was not before yesterday that I received your splendid benefaction. To a hand so liberal in distributing, I hope nobody will envy the power of acquiring. I am, dear Sir,

"Your obliged and most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"June 23, 1781 "

¹ "I suppose he was neither glad nor sorry," writes Mrs Piozzi in the margin of her copy. In her autobiography she says, "Will it surprise you now to hear that, among all my fellow executors, none but Johnson opposed selling the concern? Cator, a rich timber merchant, was afraid of implicating his own credit as a commercial man. Crutchley hated Perkins, and lived upon the verge of a quarrel with him every day while they acted together. Smith cursed the whole business, and wondered what his relation, Mr Thrale, could mean by leaving him 2000^l he said, and such a burden on his back to bear for it. All were well pleased

to find themselves secured, and the brewhouse decently, though not very advantageously disposed of, except dear Doctor Johnson, who found some odd delight in signing drafts for hundreds and for thousands, to him a new, and as it appeared delightful, occupation. When all was nearly over, however, I cured his honest heart of its incipient passion for trade, by letting him into some, and only some, of its mysteries. The plant, as it is called, was sold, and I gave God thanks upon What Sunday, 1781, for sparing me farther perplexity, though at the cost of a good house," &c.

without seeing you ; for to see a man so skilful in the antiquities of my country, is an opportunity of improvement not willingly to be missed

" Your notes on Alfred * appear to me very judicious and accurate, but they are too few. Many things familiar to you are unknown to me, and to most others, and you must not think too favourably of your readers by supposing them knowing, you will leave them ignorant. Measure of land, and value of money, it is of great importance to state with care Had the Saxons any gold coin ?

" I have much curiosity after the manners and transactions of the middle ages, but have wanted either diligence or opportunity in both You, Sir, have great opportunities, and I wish you both diligence and success

" I am, Sir, &c

" SAM JOHNSON

" July 17, 1781 "

The following curious anecdote I insert in Dr Burney's own words " Dr Burney related to Dr Johnson the partiality which his writings had excited in a friend of Dr. Burney's, the late Mr Bewley, well known in Norfolk by the name of the *Philosopher of Massingham*, who, from the *Ramblers* and plan of his Dictionary, and long before the authour's fame was established by the Dictionary itself, or any other work, had conceived such a reverence for him, that he urgently begged Dr. Burney to give him the cover of the first letter he had received from him, as a relick of so estimable a writer. This was in 1755 In 1760, when Dr Burney visited Dr Johnson at the Temple in London, where he had then Chambers, he happened to arrive there before he was up ; and being shewn into the room where he was to breakfast, finding himself alone, he examined the contents of the apartment, to try whether he could undiscovered steal any thing to send to his friend Bewley, as another relick of the admirable Dr. Johnson. But finding nothing better to his purpose, he cut some bristles off his hearth-broom, and inclosed them in a letter to his country enthusiast, who received them with due reverence The Doctor was so sensible of the honour done him by a man of genius and science, to whom he was an utter stranger, that he said to Dr Burney, ' Sir, there is no man possessed of the smallest portion of modesty, but must be flattered with the admiration of such a man I'll give him

* The Will of King Alfred, alluded to in this letter, is now printing from the original Saxon, in the library of Mr Astle, at the expence of the University of Oxford It is not to be sold, but is to be distributed in presents

Cor et Ad —Line 11 For " in " read " or "

a set of my Lives if he will do me the honour to accept of them.' In this he kept his word ; and Dr. Burney had not only the pleasure of gratifying his friend with a present more worthy of his acceptance than the segment from the hearth-broom, but soon after of introducing him to Dr Johnson himself in Bolt-court, with whom he had the satisfaction of conversing a considerable time, not a fortnight before his death, which happened in St Martin's-street, during his visit to Dr Burney, in the house where the great Sir Isaac Newton had lived and died before.

In one of his little memorandum-books is the following minute :

" August 9, 3 p.m. ætat 72, in the summer-house at Streatham.

" After innumerable resolutions formed and neglected, I have retired hither, to plant a life of greater diligence, in hope that I may yet be useful, and be daily better prepared to appear before my Creator and my Judge, from whose infinite mercy I humbly call for assistance and support.

" My purpose is,

" To pass eight hours every day in some serious employment.

" Having prayed, I purpose to employ the next six weeks upon the Italian language, for my settled study."

How venerably pious does he appear in these moments of solitude, and how spirited are his resolutions for the improvement of his mind, even in elegant literature at a very advanced period of life, and when afflicted with many complaints.

In autumn he went to Oxford, Birmingham, Lichfield, and Ashbourne, for which very good reasons might be given, in the conjectural yet positive manner of writers, who are proud to account for every event which they relate. He himself however says, " The motives of my journey I hardly know ; I omitted it last year, and am not willing to miss it again."^a But some good considerations arise, amongst which is the kindly recollection of Mr Hector, surgeon, at Birmingham. " Hector is likewise an old friend, the only companion of my childhood that passed through the school with me. We have always loved one another, perhaps we may be made better by some serious conversation, of which however I have no distinct hope."

He says too, " At Lichfield, my native place, I hope to shew a good example by frequent attendance on publick worship."

My correspondence with him during the rest of this year was I know not why very scanty, and all on my side. I wrote him one

^a Prayers and Meditations, p 201

letter to introduce Mr. Sinclair (now Sir John) the member for Caithness, to his acquaintance, and informed him in another, that my wife had again been affected with alarming symptoms of illness.

In 1782, his complaints increased, and the history of his life for this year, is little more than a mournful recital of the variations of his illness, in the midst of which, however, it will appear from his letters, that the powers of his mind were in no degree impaired

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq

"DEAR SIR,—I sit down to answer your letter on the same day in which I received it, and am pleased that my first letter of the year is to you. No man ought to be at ease while he knows himself in the wrong, and I have not satisfied myself with my long silence. The letter relating to Mr Sinclair, however was, I believe, never brought.

"My health has been tottering this last year, and I can give no very laudable account of my time I am always hoping to do better than I have ever hitherto done.

"My journey to Ashbourne and Staffordshire was not pleasant, for what enjoyment has a sick man visiting the sick? Shall we ever have another frolick like our journey to the Hebrides?

"I hope that dear Mrs Boswell will surmount her complaints, in losing her you would lose your anchor, and be tost, without stability, by the waves of life.* I wish both her and you very many years, and very happy.

* The truth of this has been proved by sad experience ¹

¹ Mrs Boswell died in 1789 "O my friend," wrote her husband in July, "this is affliction indeed! My two boys and I posted from London to Auchinleck, night and day, in sixty-four hours and a quarter, but alas! our haste was all in vain The fatal stroke had taken place before we set out It was very strange that we had no intelligence whatever upon the road, not even in our own parish, nor till my second daughter came running out from the house, and announced to us the dismal event in a burst of tears O my Temple, what distress! what tender and painful regrets! what unavailing, earnest wishes to have but one week, one day, in which I might again hear her admirable conversation, and assure her of my fervent attachment, notwithstanding all my irre-

gularities It was some relief to me to be told, that she had, after I was set out, mentioned what I think I wrote to you, that she had pressed me to go up and show my zeal for Lord Lonsdale, but when on my return, before the Cause came on, I found that by my going away at that unlucky time I had not been with her to soothe her last moments, I cried bitterly, and upbraided myself for leaving her, for she would not have left me This reflection, my dear friend, will, I fear, pursue me to my grave She had suffered a great deal from her disease for some weeks before her death, but the actual scene of dying itself was not dreadful She continued quite sensible till a few minutes before, when she began to doze calmly, and expired without any struggle When I saw her, four days

"For some months past I have been so withdrawn from the world, that I can send you nothing particular. All your friends, however, are well, and will be glad of your return to London. I am, dear Sir,

"Yours most affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON

"January 5, 1782"

At a time when he was less able than he had once been to sustain a shock, he was suddenly deprived of Mr. Levett, which he thus communicated to Dr. Lawrence:¹

"SIR,—Our old friend, Mr. Levett, who was last night eminently cheerful, died this morning. The man who lay in the same room, hearing an uncommon noise, got up and tried to make him speak, but without effect. He then called Mr. Holder, the apothecary, who though when he came he thought him dead, opened a vein, but could draw no blood. So has ended the long life of a very useful and very blameless man I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"Jan 17, 1782"

In one of his memorandum-books in my possession, is the following entry: "January 20, Sunday. Robert Levett was buried in the

after, her countenance was not at all disfigured. But alas! to see my excellent wife and the mother of my children, and that most sensible, lively woman, lying cold and pale and insensible, was very shocking to me. I could not help doubting it was a deception. I could hardly bring myself to agree that the body should be removed, for it was still a consolation to me to go and kneel by it, and talk to my dear, dear Peggie. She was much respected by all who knew her, so that her funeral was remarkably well attended. There were nineteen carriages followed the hearse, and a large body of horsemen and the tenants of all my lands. It is not customary in Scotland for a husband to attend a wife's funeral, but I resolved, if I possibly could, to do her the last honours myself, and I was able to go through it very decently. I privately read the funeral service over her coffin in presence of my sons, and was relieved by that ceremony a good deal. On the Sunday after, Mr. Dunn delivered, almost verbatim, a few sentences which I sent him as a character of her. I ima-

gined that I should not be able to stay here, after the sad misfortune, but I find that I cling to it with a melancholy pleasure." The following lament, which is pathetic enough, was written a few months later—"O, my friend! what would I give for one of those years with my dearest cousin, friend, and wife, which are past. May I not flatter myself with a dawn of hope that I shall be permitted to see her again, aye, and to be with her, not to be separated? What can one think, what can one do in so wretched a state as this? She used on all occasions to be my comforter, she, methinks, could now suggest rational thoughts to me—but where is she? O my Temple, I am miserable!"

¹ Diligent and untiring as was Mr. Boswell in the collection of facts, it must not be supposed that all his materials were original. He is under great obligations to Sir J. Hawkins, from whose book this letter is taken. Many other letters appeared in magazines before the "Life" came out, and were adopted without acknowledgment.

church-yard of Bridewell, between one and two in the afternoon. He died on Thursday 17, about seven in the morning, by an instantaneous death. He was an old and faithful friend, I have known him from about 46 *Commendari*. May God have mercy on him. May he have mercy on me."

Such was Johnson's affectionate regard for Levett,^a that he honoured his memory with the following verses :

- " CONDEMN'D to Hope's delusive mine,
As on we toil from day to day,
By sudden blast or slow decline,
Our social comforts drop away.
- " Well try'd through many a varying year,
See LEVETT to the grave descend,
Officious, innocent, sincere,
Of ev'ry friendless name the friend.
- " Yet still he fills Affection's eye,
Obscurely wise and coarsely kind;
Nor, letter'd arrogance,^b deny
The praise to merit unrefin'd.
- " When fainting Nature call'd for aid,
And hov'ring Death prepar'd the blow,
His vigorous remedy display'd
The pow'r of art without the show.
- " In Misery's darkest caverns known,
His ready help was ever nigh,
Where hopeless Anguish pours his groan,
And lonely Want retir'd to die."^c
- " No summons mock'd by chill delay,
No petty gains disdain'd by pride;
The modest wants of ev'ry day
The toil of ev'ry day supply'd.
- " His virtues walk'd their narrow round,
Nor made a pause nor left a void;
And sure th' Eternal Master found
His single talent well employ'd.

^a See an account of him in "Gentleman's Magazine," Feb. 1785.

^b In both editions of Sir John Hawkins's *Life of Dr. Johnson*, "letter'd *ignorance*," is printed.

^c Johnson repeated this line to me thus

"And Labour steals an hour to die"

But he afterwards altered it to the present reading.

" The busy day, the peaceful night,
 Unfelt, uncounted, glided by,
 His frame was firm, his powers were bright,
 Though now his eightieth year was nigh.

" Then, with no throbs of fiery pain,
 No cold gradations of decay,
 Death broke at once the vital chain,
 And freed his soul the nearest way. '

In one of his registers of this year, there occurs the following curious passage. "Jan 20¹ The ministry is dissolved. I prayed with Francis, and gave thanks "a It has been the subject of discussion, whether there are two distinct particulars mentioned here, or that we are to understand the giving of thanks to be in consequence of the dissolution of the ministry. In support of the last of these conjectures, may be urged his mean opinion of that ministry, which has frequently appeared in the course of this work, and it is strongly confirmed by what he said on the subject to Mr. Seward—"I am glad the ministry is removed. Such a bunch of imbecility never disgraced a country If they sent a messenger into the City to take up a printer, the messenger was taken up instead of the printer, and committed by the sitting Alderman If they sent one army to the relief of another, the first army was defeated and taken before the second arrived. I will not say that what they did was always wrong; but it was always done at a wrong time."

To Mrs STRAHAN.

"DEAR MADAM,—Mrs Williams shewed me your kind letter. This little habitation is now but a melancholy place, clouded with the gloom of disease and death. Of the four inmates, one has been suddenly snatched away, two are oppressed by very afflictive and dangerous illness, and I tried yesterday to gain some relief by a third bleeding, from a disorder which has for some time distressed me, and I think myself to-day much better

"I am glad, dear Madam, to hear that you are so far recovered as to go to Bath. Let me once more entreat you to stay till your health is not only obtained but confirmed. Your fortune is such as that no moderate expence deserves your care, and

^a Prayers and Meditations, p 209^a

¹ A mistake for Mar. 20.

^a Mistake for p. 207.

you have a husband who, I believe, does not regard it Stay, therefore till you are quite well. I am, for my part, very much deserted; but complaint is useless. I hope God will bless you, and I desire you to form the same wish for me. I am, dear Madam,

"Your most humble servant,

"Feb 4, 1782"

"SAM JOHNSON

To EDMOND MALONE, Esq.

"SIR,—I have for many weeks been so much out of order, that I have gone out only in a coach to Mrs. Thrale's, where I can use all the freedom that sickness requires¹ Do not, therefore, take it amiss, that I am not with you and Dr Farmer. I hope hereafter to see you often I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"Feb 27, 1782"

To the same.

"DEAR SIR,—I hope I grow better, and shall soon be able to enjoy the kindness of my friends. I think this wild adherence to Chatterton more unaccountable than the obstinate defence of Ossian. In Ossian there is a national pride, which may be forgiven, though it cannot be applauded. In Chatterton there is nothing but the resolution to say again what has once been said.² I am, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"March 2, 1782"

"SAM JOHNSON.

These short letters shew the regard which Dr Johnson entertained for Mr. Malone, who the more he is known is the more

¹ "The truth is Mr Johnson has some occult disorder that I cannot understand, Jebb and Bromfield fancy it is water between the heart and *peri-cardium* He apprehends no danger himself, and he knows more of the matter than any of them all"—*Thraliana*

² Mr Malone thus explains the object of this letter—"This note was in answer to one which accompanied one of the earliest pamphlets on the subject of Chatterton's forgery, entitled 'Cursory Observations on the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley,' &c . . . Daring, however, as this fiction was, and wild as was the adherence to Chatterton, both were greatly exceeded in 1795 and the following year, by a still more audacious imposture, and the pertinacity of one of

its adherents, who has immortalized his name by publishing a bulky volume, of which the direct and manifest object was, to prove the authenticity of certain papers attributed to Shakspeare after the fabricator of the spurious trash had publicly acknowledged the imposture!" Malone had taken a vigorous part in the Ireland controversy, but his invective is rather out of keeping with the work he is illustrating, as Mr Boswell had favoured the "audacious imposture."

"On the arrival of Mr Boswell," says Ireland, in his "Memoirs," "the papers were as usual placed before him, when he commenced the examination of them, and being satisfied as to their antiquity, as far as the external appearance would attest, he proceeded to ex-

highly valued. It is much to be regretted that Johnson was prevented from sharing the elegant hospitality of that gentleman's table, at which he would in every respect have been fully gratified. Mr. Malone, who has so ably succeeded him as an Editor of *Shakespeare*, has, in his Preface, done great and just honour to Johnson's memory.

To Mrs. Lucy Porter, in Lichfield.

"DEAR MADAM,—I went away from Lichfield ill, and have had a troublesome time with my breath; for some weeks I have been disordered by a cold, of which I could not get the violence abated, till I had been let blood three times. I have not, however, been so bad but that I could have written, and I am sorry that I neglected it.

"My dwelling is but melancholy, both Williams, and Desmoulins, and myself are very sickly, Frank is not well, and poor Levett died in his bed the other day, by a sudden stroke; I suppose not one minute passed between health and death; so uncertain are human things

"Such is the appearance of the world about me, I hope your scenes are more cheerful. But whatever befalls us, though it is wise to be serious, it is useless and foolish, and perhaps sinful to be gloomy. Let us, therefore, keep ourselves as easy as we can, though the loss of friends will be felt, and poor Levett had been a faithful adherent for thirty years.

"Forgive me, my dear love, the omission of writing; I hope to mend that and my other faults. Let me have your prayers.

"Make my compliments to Mr. Cobb, and Miss Adey, and Mr. Pearson, and the whole company of my friends. I am, my dear,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"London, March 2, 1782"

amine the style of the language from the fair transcripts, made from the disguised handwriting. In this research Mr Boswell continued for a considerable length of time, constantly speaking in favour of the internal as well as external proofs of the validity of the MSS. At length, finding himself rather thirsty, he requested a tumbler of warm brandy and water, which having nearly finished, he then redoubled his praise of the MSS, and, at length, rising from his

chair, he made use of the following expression: 'Well, I shall now die contented, since I have lived to witness the present day.' Mr Boswell then, kneeling down before the volume containing a portion of the papers, continued: 'I now kiss the invaluable relics of our bard, and thanks to God that I have lived to see them.' Having kissed the volume with every token of reverence, Mr. Boswell shortly after quitted Mr. Ireland's house."

To the same.

"DEAR MADAM,—My last was but a dull letter, and I know not that this will be much more chearful; I am however willing to write, because you are desirous to hear from me.

"My disorder has now begun its ninth week, for it is not yet over. I was last Thursday blooded for the fourth time, and have since found myself much relieved, but I am very tender and easily hurt, so that since we parted I have had little comfort, but I hope that the spring will recover me, and that in the summer I shall see Lichfield again, for I will not delay my visit another year to the end of autumn.

"I have, by advertising, found poor Mr Levett's brothers in Yorkshire, who will take the little that he has left, it is but little, yet it will be welcome, for I believe they are of very low condition.

"To be sick, and to see nothing but sickness and death, is but a gloomy state, but I hope better times, even in this world will come, and whatever this world may withhold or give, we shall be happy in a better state. Pray for me, my dear Lucy.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Cobb, and Miss Adey, and my old friend, Hetty Bailey, and to all the Lichfield ladies. I am, dear Madam,

"Yours, affectionately,

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street,
"March 19, 1782"

"SAM. JOHNSON.

On the day on which this letter was written, he thus feelingly mentions his respected friend and physician, Dr. Lawrence:—"Poor Lawrence has almost lost the sense of hearing, and I have lost the conversation of a learned, intelligent, and communicative companion, and a friend whom long familiarity has much endeared. Lawrence is one of the best men whom I have known — '*Nostrum omnium misera Deus.*'"^a

It was Dr. Johnson's custom when he wrote to Dr. Lawrence concerning his own health, to use the Latin language. I have been favoured by Miss Lawrence with one of these letters as a specimen.

T LAWRENTIO, *Medico S.*

"*Novum frigus, nova tussis, nova spirandi difficultas, novam sanguinis missionem suadent, quam tamen te inconsulto nolim*

^a Prayers and Meditations, p. 207

Cor et Ad—Line 32 For "*misera*" read "*miserere*"

fieri. Ad te venire vix possum, nec est cur ad me venias. Licere vel non licere uno verbo dicendum est, cætera mihi et Holdero^a relinqueris. Si per te licet, imperatur nuncio Holderum ad me deducere

^a *Maus Calendus, 1782.*

"Postquam tu discesseris quò me vertam?"^b

To Captain LANGTON," in ROCHESTER.

"DEAR SIR,—It is now long since we saw one another, and whatever has been the reason neither you have written to me, nor I to you. To let friendship die away by negligence and silence, is certainly not wise. It is voluntarily to throw away one of the greatest comforts of this weary pilgrimage, of which when it is, as it must be, taken finally away, he that travels on alone, will wonder how his esteem could be so little. Do not forget me, you see that I do not forget you. It is pleasing in the silence of solitude to think, that there is one at least, however distant, of whose benevolence there is little doubt, and whom there is yet hope of seeing again.

"Of my life, from the time we parted, the history is mournful.

^a Mr. Holder, Dr. Johnson's apothecary

^b Soon after the above letter, Dr. Lawrence left London, but not before the palsy had made so great a progress as to render him unable to write for himself.—The following are extracts from letters addressed to one of his daughters

"You will easily believe with what gladness I read that you had heard once again that voice to which we have all so often delighted to attend. May you often hear it. If we had his mind, and his tongue, we could spare the rest.

"I am not vigorous, but much better than when dear Dr. Lawrence held my pulse the last time. Be so kind as to let me know, from one little interval to another, the state of his body. I am pleased that he remembers me, and hope that it never can be possible for me to forget him. July 22, 1782."

"I am much delighted even with the small advances which dear Dr. Lawrence makes towards recovery. If we could have again but his mind, and his tongue in his mind, and his right hand, we should not much lament the rest. I should not despair of helping the swelled hand by electricity, if it were frequently and diligently supplied.

"Let me know from time to time whatever happens, and hope I need not tell you, how much I am interested in every change. Aug. 26, 1782."

"Though the accounts with which you favoured me in your last letter could not give me the pleasure that I wished, yet I was glad to receive it, for my affection to my dear friend makes me desirous of knowing his state, whatever it be. I beg, therefore, that you continue to let me know, from time to time, all that you observe.

"Many fits of severe illness have, for about three months past, forced my kind physician often upon my mind. I am now better, and hope gratitude, as well as distress, can be a motive to remembrance. Bolt-court, Fleet-street, Feb. 4, 1783."

^c Mr. Langton being at this time on duty at Rochester, he is addressed by his military title.

Second Edition.—First line of notes add "in the Strand"

The spring of last year deprived me of Thrale, a man whose eye for fifteen years had scarcely been turned upon me but with respect or tenderness; for such another friend, the general course of human things will not suffer man to hope. I passed the summer at Streatham, but there was no Thrale, and having idled away the summer with a weakly body and neglected mind, I made a journey to Staffordshire on the edge of winter. The season was dreary, I was sickly, and found the friends sickly whom I went to see. After a sorrowful sojourn, I returned to a habitation possessed for the present by two sick women, where my dear old friend, Mr. Levett, to whom as he used to tell me, I owe your acquaintance, died a few weeks ago, suddenly in his bed, there passed not, I believe, a minute between health and death. At night, as at Mrs. Thrale's, I was musing in my chamber, I thought with uncommon earnestness, that however I might alter my mode of life, or whithersoever I might remove, I would endeavour to retain Levett about me; in the morning my servant brought me word that Levett was called to another state, a state for which, I think, he was not unprepared, for he was very useful to the poor. How much soever I valued him, I now wish that I had valued him more.

"I have myself been ill more than eight weeks of a disorder, from which at the expence of about fifty ounces of blood, I hope I am now recovering."

"You, dear Sir, have, I hope, a more cheerful scene, you see George fond of his book, and the pretty misses airy and lively, with my own little Jenny equal to the best, and in whatever can contribute to your quiet or pleasure, you have Lady Rothes ready to concur. May whatever you enjoy of good be encreased, and whatever you suffer of evil be diminished

"I am, dear Sir, your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street,

"March 20, 1782 "

*To Mr. HECTOR, in Birmingham.**

"DEAR SIR,—I hope I do not very grossly flatter myself to imagine that you and dear Mrs. Careless will be glad to hear some account of me. I performed the journey to London with very little inconvenience, and came safe to my habitation, where I found nothing but ill-health, and, of consequence, very little cheerfulness. I then went to visit a little way into the country, where I got a com-

* A part of this letter having been torn off, I have, from the evident meaning, supplied a few words and half words at the ends and beginnings of lines.

plaint by a cold which has hung eight weeks upon me, and from which I am, at the expence of fifty ounces of blood, not yet free. I am afraid I must once more owe my recovery to warm weather, which seems to make the advances towards us.

"Such is my health, which will, I hope, soon grow better. In other respects I have no reason to complain. I know not that I have written any thing more generally commended than the *Lives of the Poets*, and have found the world willing enough to caress me, if my health had invited me to be in much company: but this season I have been almost wholly employed in nursing myself.

"When summer comes I hope to see you again, and will not put off my visit to the end of the year. I have lived so long in London, that I did not remember the difference of seasons.

"Your health, when I saw you, was much improved. You will be prudent enough not to put it in danger. I hope, when we meet again, we shall all congratulate each other upon fair prospects of longer life; though what are the pleasures of the longest life, when placed in comparison with a happy death? I am, dear Sir, yours most affectionately,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"London, March 21, 1781."

To the same

[*Without a date, but supposed to be about this time*]

"DEAR SIR,—That you and dear Mrs Careless should have care or curiosity about my health, gives me that pleasure which every man feels from finding himself not forgotten. In age we feel again that love of our native place and our early friends, which, in the bustle or amusements of middle life, were overborn and suspended. You and I should now naturally cling to one another. we have outlived most of those who could pretend to rival us in each other's kindness. In our walk through life we have dropped our companions, and are now to pick up such as chance may offer us, or to travel on alone. You, indeed, have a sister, with whom you can divide the day: I have no natural friend left, but Providence has been pleased to preserve me from neglect; I have not wanted such alleviations of life as friendship could supply. My health has been, from my twentieth year, such as has seldom afforded me a single day of ease; but it is at least not worse: and I sometimes make myself believe that it is better. My disorders are, however, still sufficiently oppressive.

"I think of seeing Staffordshire again this autumn, and intend to find my way through Birmingham, where I hope to see you and dear Mrs. Careless well. I am, Sir, your affectionate friend,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

I wrote to him at different dates; regretted that I could not come to London this spring, but hoped we should meet somewhere in the summer, mentioned the state of my affairs, and suggested hopes of some preferment,¹ informed him, that as "*The Beauties of Johnson*" had been published in London, some obscure scribbler had published at Edinburgh, what he called "*Deformities of Johnson*."

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—The pleasure which we used to receive from each other on Good-Friday and Easter-day, we must be this year content to miss. Let us, however, pray for each other, and hope to see one another yet from time to time with mutual delight. My disorder has been a cold, which impeded the organs of respiration, and kept me many weeks in a state of great uneasiness, but by repeated phlebotomy it is now relieved, and next to the recovery of Mrs. Boswell, I flatter myself, that you will rejoice at mine.

"What we shall do in the summer it is yet too early to consider. You want to know what you shall do now, I do not think this time of bustle and confusion likely to produce any advantage to you. Every man has those to reward and gratify who have contributed to his advancement. To come hither with such expectations at the expence of borrowed money, which, I find, you know not where to borrow, can hardly be considered as prudent. I am sorry to find, what your solicitation seems to imply, that you have already gone the whole length of your credit. This is to set the quiet of your whole life at hazard. If you anticipate your inheritance, you can at last inherit nothing; all that you receive must pay for the past. You must get a place, or pine in penury, with the empty name of a great estate. Poverty, my dear friend, is so great an evil, and pregnant with so much temptation, and so much misery, that I cannot but earnestly enjoin you to avoid it. Live on what you have, live if you can on less, do not borrow either for vanity or pleasure; the vanity will end in shame, and the pleasure in regret; stay therefore at home, till you have saved money for your journey hither.

¹ From Mr Burke, who, as we have seen, recommended him for a place to

General Conway, drawing his character "in glowing colours,"

" 'The Beauties of Johnson' are said to have got money to the collector; if the 'Deformities' have the same success, I shall be still a more extensive benefactor.

" Make my compliments to Mrs Boswell, who is, I hope, reconciled to me, and to the young people, whom I never have offended.

" You never told me the success of your plea against the Solicitors.

" I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate,

" SAM. JOHNSON.

" London, March 28, 1782 "

Notwithstanding his afflicted state of body and mind this year, the following correspondence affords a proof not only of his benevolence and conscientious readiness to relieve a good man from error, but by his clothing one of the sentiments in his " Rambler " in different language, not inferior to that of the original, shews his extraordinary command of clear and forcible expression.

A clergyman at Bath wrote to him, that in " The Morning Chronicle," a passage in " The Beauties of Johnson," article DEATH, had been pointed out as supposed by some readers to recommend suicide, the words being, " To die is the fate of man, but to die with lingering anguish is generally his folly," and respectfully suggesting to him, that such an erroneous notion of any sentence in the writings of an acknowledged friend of religion and virtue, should not pass uncontradicted.

Johnson thus answered the clergyman's letter :

To the Reverend Mr ———, at Bath.

" SIR,—Being now in the country in a state of recovery, as I hope, from a very oppressive disorder, I cannot neglect the acknowledgement of your Christian letter. The book called " The Beauties of Johnson," is the production of I know not whom: I never saw it but by casual inspection, and considered myself as utterly disengaged from its consequences. Of the passage you mention, I remember some notice in some paper, but, knowing that it must be misrepresented, I thought of it no more, nor do I know where to find it in my own books. I am accustomed to think little of news-papers, but an opinion so weighty and serious as yours has determined me to do, what I should, without your seasonable admonition, have omitted, and I will direct my thought to be shewn in its true state.* If I could find the passage, I would direct

* What follows appeared in the Morning Chronicle of May 29, 1782 — " A correspondent having mentioned, in the Morning Chronicle of December 12, the last

you to it. I suppose the tenour is this—'Acute diseases are the immediate and inevitable strokes of Heaven, but of them the pain is short, and the conclusion speedy: chronical disorders, by which we are suspended in tedious torture between life and death, are commonly the effect of our own misconduct and intemperance. To die, &c.'—This, Sir, you see, is all true, and all blameless. I hope, some time in the next week, to have all rectified. My health has been lately much shaken; if you favour this with any answer, it will be a comfort to me to know that I have your prayers.

"I am, &c.

"SAM JOHNSON.

"May 15, 1782"

This letter, as might be expected, had its full effect, and the clergyman acknowledged it in grateful and pious terms.*

The following letters require no extracts from mine to introduce them.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—The earnestness and tenderness of your letter is such, that I cannot think myself shewing it more respect than it claims by setting down to answer it the day on which I received it

"This year has afflicted me with a very irksome and severe disorder. My respiration has been much impeded, and much blood has been taken away. I am now harrassed by a catarrhus cough, from which my purpose is to seek relief by change of air, and I am, therefore, preparing to go to Oxford.

"Whether I did right in dissuading you from coming to London this spring, I will not determine. You have not lost much by missing my company, I have scarcely been well for a single week. I might have received comfort from your kindness, but you would have seen me afflicted, and, perhaps, found me peevish. Whatever might have been your pleasure or mine, I know not how I could have honestly advised you to come hither with borrowed money. Do not accustom yourself to consider debts only as an inconvenience: you

clause of the following paragraph, as seeming to favour suicide, we are requested to print the whole passage, that its true meaning may appear, which is not to recommend suicide, but exercise

"Exercise cannot secure us from that dissolution to which we are decreed, but while the soul and body continue united, it can make the association pleasing, and give probable hopes that they shall be disjoined by an easy separation. It was a principle among the ancients, that acute diseases are from Heaven, and chronical from ourselves, the dart of death, indeed, falls from Heaven, but we poison it by our own misconduct to die is the fate of man, but to die with lingering anguish is generally his folly"

* The Correspondence may be seen at length in the Gentleman's Magazine, Feb. 1786.

Cor. et Ad—I me 33 For "debts" read "debt."

will find it a calamity.¹ Poverty takes away so many means of doing good, and produces so much inability to resist evil, both natural and moral, that it is by all virtuous means to be avoided. Consider a man whose fortune is very narrow; whatever be his rank by birth, or whatever his reputation by intellectual excellence, what good can he do? or what evil can he prevent? That he cannot help the needy is evident, he has nothing to spare. But, perhaps, his advice or admonition may be useful. His poverty will destroy his influence: many more can find that he is poor, than that he is wise, and few will reverence the understanding that is of so little advantage to its owner. I say nothing of the personal wretchedness of a debtor, which, however, has passed into a proverb. Of riches, it is not necessary to write the praise. Let it, however, be remembered, that he who has money to spare, has it always in his power to benefit others, and of such power a good man must always be desirous.

"I am pleased with your account of Easter." We shall meet, I hope, in autumn, both well and both chearful; and part each the better for the other's company.

"Make my compliments to Mrs Boswell, and to the young charmers.

"I am, &c.

"SAM JOHNSON.

"London, June 3, 1782."

* Which I celebrated in the Church-of-England chapel at Edinburgh, founded by Lord Chief Baron Smith, of respectable and pious memory
Cor et Ad—Between the two letters to Mr Boswell, read—

"TO MR PERKINS

"DEAR SIR,—I am much pleased that you are going a very long journey, which may by proper conduct restore your health and prolong your life.

"Observe these rules

"1 Turn all care out of your head as soon as you mount the chaise

"2 Do not think about frugality, your health is worth more than it can cost.

"3 Do not continue any day's journey to fatigue

"4 Take now and then a day's rest

"5 Get a smart sea sickness, if you can

"6 Cast away all anxiety, and keep your mind easy

"Thus last direction is the principal, with an unquiet mind, neither exercise, nor diet, nor phymck, can be of much use.

"I wish you, dear Sir, a prosperous journey, and a happy recovery. I am, dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate, humble servant,

"July 28, 1782 "

"SAM JOHNSON.

¹ Boswell found that the allowance of 300*l* a year received from his father was quite inadequate, and, in vain, tried to get him to raise it to 400*l*. "The woman,"

adds Mr Boswell, speaking of his mother-in-law, who had never forgiven his opposition, "is implacable."

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—Being uncertain whether I should have any call this autumn into the country, I did not immediately answer your kind letter I have no call, but if you desire to meet me at Ashbourne, I believe I can come thither; if you had rather come to London, I can stay at Streatham, take your choice.

"This year has been very heavy From the middle of January to the middle of June I was battered by one disorder after another; I am now very much recovered, and hope still to be better. What happiness it is that Mrs. Boswell has escaped

"My 'Lives' are reprinting, and I have forgotten the authour of Gray's character:" write immediately, and it may be perhaps yet inserted

"Of London or Ashbourne you have your free choice; at any place I shall be glad to see you. I am, dear Sir, your, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"Aug 24, 1782"

On the 30th of August, I informed him that my honoured father had died that morning,¹ a complaint under which he had long laboured, having suddenly come to a crisis, while I was upon a visit at the seat of Sir Charles Preston, from whence I had hastened the day before, upon receiving a letter by express.

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—I have struggled through this year with so much infirmity of body, and such strong impressions of the fragility of life, that death, wherever it appears, fills me with melancholy; and

* The Reverend Mr Temple, Vicar of St Gluvias, Cornwall.

¹ "At Edinburgh, in the seventy-sixth year of his age, Alexander Boswell, of Auchmleck, Esq., one of the leaders of the College of Justice, and for many years one of the Lords Commissioners of Justice, which last office he resigned when the state of his health made it improper for him any longer to undergo its duties"—(*Scots Magazine*.) He was succeeded by the notorious Braxfield. His uncle, Dr Boswell, had died towards the end of the year 1780, of whom he gives this strange sketch "He was a very good scholar, knew a great many things, had an elegant taste, and was very affectionate, but he had no conduct His money was all gone; and do you know he was cou-

finet to one woman. He had a strange kind of religion, but I flatter myself he will be ere long, if he is not already, in heaven." The pleasant biographer was unconsciously drawing his own character It was unfortunate that he should invariably have been away enjoying himself when those most dear to him were on their deathbed. The news of his mother's death found him at Paris, when his father was taken ill he was away, and his wife was already dead when he was preparing to travel post from London to reach her bedside From Johnson's deathbed he was also destined to be absent.

I cannot hear without emotion, of the removal of any one, whom I have known, into another state.

"Your father's death had every circumstance that could enable you to bear it; it was at a mature age, and it was expected, and as his general life had been pious, his thoughts had doubtless for many years past been turned upon eternity. That you did not find him sensible must doubtless grieve you, his disposition towards you was undoubtedly that of a kind, though not of a fond father. Kindness, at least actual, is in our power, but fondness is not; and if by negligence or imprudence you had extinguished his fondness, he could not at will rekindle it. Nothing then remained between you but mutual forgiveness of each other's faults, and mutual desire of each other's happiness.

"I shall long to know his final disposition of his fortune.

"You, dear Sir, have now a new station, and have therefore new cares, and new employments. Life, as Cowley seems to say, ought to resemble a well ordered poem, of which one rule generally received is, that the exordium should be simple, and should promise little. Begin your new course of life with the least show, and the least expence possible, you may at pleasure encrease both, but you cannot easily diminish them. Do not think your estate your own, while any man can call upon you for money which you cannot pay; therefore, begin with timorous parsimony. Let it be your first care not to be in any man's debt.

"When the thoughts are extended to a future state, the present life seems hardly worthy of all those principles of conduct, and maxims of prudence, which one generation of men has transmitted to another; but upon a closer view, when it is perceived how much evil is produced, and how much good is impeded by embarrassment and distress, and how little room the expedients of poverty leave for the exercise of virtue, its sorrows manifest that the boundless importance of the next life, enforces some attention to the interests of this

"Be kind to the old servants, and secure the kindness of the agents and factors, do not disgust them by asperity, or unwelcome gaiety, or apparent suspicion. From them you must learn the real state of your affairs, the characters of your tenants, and the value of your lands.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, I think her expectations from air and exercise are the best that she can form. I hope she will live long and happily.

"I forget whether I told you that Rasay has been here; we dined cheerfully together. I entertained lately a young gentleman from Cornatachat.

"I received your letters only this morning. I am, dear Sir, yours, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"London, Sept 7, 1782 "

In answer to my next letter, I received one from him, dissuading me from hastening to him as I had proposed, what is proper for publication is the following paragraph, equally just and tender.

"One expence, however, I would not have you to spare: let nothing be omitted that can preserve Mrs. Boswell, though it should be necessary to transplant her for a time into a softer climate. She is the prop and stay of your life. How much must your children suffer by losing her "

My wife was now so much convinced of his sincere friendship for me, and regard for her, that she without any suggestion on my part, wrote him a very polite and grateful letter.

Dr. JOHNSON to Mrs. BOSWELL.

"DEAR LADY,—I have not often received so much pleasure as from your invitation to Auchinleck The journey thither and back is, indeed, too great for the latter part of the year; but if my health were fully recovered, I would suffer no little heat and cold, nor a wet or a rough road to keep me from you. I am, indeed, not without hope of seeing Auchinleck again, but to make it a pleasant place I must see its lady well, and brisk, and airy. For my sake, therefore, among many greater reasons, take care, dear Madam, of your health, spare no expence, and want no attendance that can procure ease, or preserve it. Be very careful to keep your mind quiet; and do not think it too much to give an account of your recovery to Madam, your, &c.

"SAM JOHNSON

"London, Sept 7, 1782 "

To JAMES BOSWELL, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—Having passed almost this whole year in a succession of disorders, I went in October to Brighthelmston,¹ whither I came in a state of so much weakness, that I rested four times

¹ From a letter of Miss Seward's to Mayley, dated October 3rd, 1782, it seems he paid a short visit of ten days to Lichfield.

in walking between the inn and the lodging. By physick and abstinence I grew better, and am now reasonably easy, though at a great distance from health. I am afraid, however, that health begins, after seventy, and often long before, to have a meaning different from that which it had at thirty. But it is culpable to murmur at the established order of the creation, as it is vain to oppose it. He that lives, must grow old, and he that would rather grow old than die, has God to thank for the infirmities of old age.

"At your long silence I am rather angry. You do not, since now you are the head of your house, think it worth your while to try whether you or your friend can live longer without writing, nor suspect after so many years of friendship, that when I do not write to you, I forget you. Put all such useless jealousies out of your head, and disdain to regulate your own practice by the practice of another, or by any other principle than the desire of doing right.

"Your œconomy, I suppose, begins now to be settled, your expences are adjusted to your revenue, and all your people in their proper places. Resolve not to be poor. whatever you have, spend less. Poverty is a great enemy to human happiness, it certainly destroys liberty, and it makes some virtues impracticable, and others extremely difficult.

"Let me know the history of your life, since your accession to your estate. How many houses, how many cows, how much land in your own hand, and what bargains you make with your tenants.

* * * * *

"Of my 'Lives of the Poets,' they have printed a new edition in octavo, I hear, of three thousand. Did I give a set to Lord Hailes? If I did not, I will do it out of these. What did you make of all your copy?

"Mrs. Thrale and the three Misses are now for the winter, in Argyll-street. Sir Joshua Reynolds has been out of order, but is well again, and I am, dear Sir, your affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"London, Dec. 7, 1782"

To Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Dec. 20, 1782.

"DEAR SIR,—I was made happy by your kind letter, which gave us the agreeable hopes of seeing you in Scotland again.

"I am much flattered by the concern you are pleased to take in

my recovery. I am better, and hope to have it in my power to convince you by my attention, of how much consequence I esteem your health to the world and to myself. I remain, Sir, with grateful respect,

"Your obliged and obedient servant,

"MARGARET BOSWELL"

The death of Mr Thrale had made a very material alteration upon Johnson, with respect to his reception in that family. The manly authority of the husband no longer curbed the lively exuberance of the lady, and as her vanity had been fully gratified, by having the Colossus of Literature attached to her for many years, she gradually became less assiduous to please him. Whether her attachment to him was already divided by another object, I am unable to ascertain, but it is plain that Johnson's penetration was alive to her neglect or forced attention, for on the 6th of October this year, we find him making a "parting use of the library" at Streatham, and pronouncing a prayer, which he composed "On leaving Mr. Thrale's family" ¹

"Almighty GOD, Father of all mercy, help me by thy grace, that I may, with humble and sincere thankfulness, remember the comforts and conveniencies which I have enjoyed at this place, and that I may resign them with holy submission, equally trusting in thy protection when Thou givest, and when Thou takest away Have mercy upon me, O LORD, have mercy upon me

"To thy fatherly protection, O LORD, I commend this family. Bless, guide, and defend them, that they may so pass through this world, as finally to enjoy in thy presence everlasting happiness, for JESUS CHRIST's sake. Amen."

One cannot read this prayer, without some emotions not very favourable to the lady whose conduct occasioned it.¹

* Prayers and Meditations, p 214

¹ It has been often repeated that Mr Boswell has done Mrs Thrale injustice here in assuming that this valedictory prayer was the consequence of a harsh dismissal from Streatham Mr Croker was the first to point out that Dr. Johnson was living with the family six months afterwards, and Lord Macaulay, who worked up one of his most effective passages on the subject, has been attacked with much severity for sacrificing Mrs. Thrale to pictorial effect. Mr.

Hayward has shown from Mrs Thrale's papers that the Streatham establishment was at that time being broken up, and that if Johnson took leave, the family did so at the same time, as the house was then let. It is thus attempted to be proved that Johnson's farewell was of a theatrical kind, and merely uttered to the old place itself

But, after all, Mr Boswell's view of the matter would seem to be right. The prayer is addressed, "on leaving Mr.

In one of his memorandum-books I find, "Sunday, went to church at Streatham. *Templo valedixi cum osculo*"

He met Mr. Philip Metcalfe often at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, and other places, and was a good deal with him at Brighthelmston this autumn, being pleased at once with his excellent table and animated conversation. Mr. Metcalfe shewed him great respect, and sent him a note that he might have the use of his carriage whenever he pleased. Johnson (3d October, 1782,) returned this polite answer:—"Mr. Johnson is very much obliged by the kind offer of the carriage; but he has no desire of using Mr. Metcalfe's carriage, except when he can have the pleasure of Mr. Metcalfe's company." Mr. Metcalfe could not but be highly pleased that his company was thus valued by Johnson, and he frequently attended him in airings. They also went together to Cirencester, and they visited Petworth

Thrale's family," and in it he commends "the family" to the protection of heaven. This is the point of the whole. And though Johnson stayed on with them a few weeks (for it is not shown that he resided with them the whole of the six months that followed) after leaving Streatham, this was only until the question of the Italian journey had been settled. He had really received his *congedo*. Mr. Boswell was right in assuming that this dismissal could only have been brought about by unkindness, and was prompted by an unworthy motive, Johnson being "alive to her neglect or forced attention," and the fact that he spent a few months with them after leaving Streatham, does not affect the matter. Her resolution to get rid of Johnson was arrived at with a sudden resolve to marry Piozzi, as will be seen from the following extract from her diary—(*Thraliana*) "22nd August, 1782. I must go abroad and save money. To show Italy to my girls and be showed it by Piozzi has long been my dearest wish, but to leave Mr. Johnson shocked me, and to take him appeared impossible. His recovery, however, from an illness we all thought dangerous, gave me courage to speak to him, and this day I mustered up resolution to tell him the necessity of changing a way of life I had long been displeased with."

A few months before she was looking for Johnson's death ("if for my sin God should take from me my monitor, my friend, my mate, my dear Dr. Johnson") as a solution of the difficulty, but the doctor recovered. Her plan then

was to go to Italy with her daughters and Piozzi, and thus, with considerations of economy, was made the pretext for dismissing Johnson. As was to be expected, the Italian journey was objected to by the executors and by the young ladies themselves, who were then well aware of their mother's object. Madame D'Arblay's description of the treatment Johnson then met with, though there is some confusion as to the date, supports Boswell's view in the most convincing way.

"From the wounds inflicted upon his injured sensibility, through the palpably altered looks, tone, and deportment of the bewildered lady of the mansion, who, cruelly aware what would be his wrath, and how overwhelming his reproaches against her projected union, wished to break up their residing under the same roof before it should be proclaimed.

"This gave to her whole behaviour towards Dr. Johnson a sort of restless petulance, of which she was sometimes hardly conscious, at others, nearly reckless, but which hurt him far more than she purposed, *though short of the point at which she aimed*, of precipitating a change of dwelling that would elude its being cast, either by himself or the world, upon a passion that her understanding blushed to own, even while she was sacrificing to it all of inborn dignity that she had been bred to hold most sacred.

"Dr. Johnson, while still uninformed of an entanglement it was impossible he should conjecture, attributed her varying humours to the effect of wayward health

and Cowdery, the venerable seat of the Lords Montacute. "Sir, (said Johnson,) I should like to stay here four-and-twenty hours. We see here how our ancestors lived."

That his curiosity, however, was unabated, appears from two letters to Mr. John Nichols, of the 10th and 20th of October this year. In one he says, "I have looked into your 'Anecdotes,' and you will hardly thank a lover of literary history for telling you, that he has been much informed and gratified. I wish you would add your own discoveries and intelligence to those of Dr Rawlinson, and undertake the Supplement to Wood. Think of it." In the other, "I wish, Sir, you could obtain some fuller information of Jortin, Markland, and Thirlby. They were three contemporaries of great eminence."

To Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"DEAR SIR,—I heard yesterday of your late disorder, and should think ill of myself if I had heard of it without alarm. I heard likewise of your recovery, which I sincerely wish to be complete and permanent. Your country has been in danger of losing one of its brightest ornaments, and I of losing one of my oldest and kindest friends: but I hope you will still live long, for the honour of the nation; and that more enjoyment of your elegance, your intelligence, and your benevolence, is still reserved for, dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate, &c.

"SAM JOHNSON.

"Brighthelmston, Nov 14, 1782"

meeting a sort of sudden wayward power and imagined that caprices, which he judged to be partly feminine, and partly wealthy, would sobersize themselves away in being unnoticed."

"But at length, as she became more and more dissatisfied with her own situation, and impatient for its relief, she grew less and less scrupulous with regard to her celebrated guest: she slighted his counsel; did not heed his remonstrances, avoided his society, was ready at a moment's hint to lend him her carriage when he wished to return to Bolt-court; but awaited a formal request to accord it for bringing him back.

"The Doctor then began to be stung, his own aspect became altered; and depression, with indignant uneasiness, sat upon his venerable front."—*Memoirs of Dr Burney*

Miss Burney was then her "bosom

friend," and this description of Mrs. Thrale's state of mind is more than confirmed by the absurd ravings that are recorded in *Thraliana*. In short, no one can read Mr. Hayward's elaborate defence of her without coming to the conclusion that she was eager not merely to be rid of Johnson, who was a check upon her discreditable passion, but to bring on such coolness or quarrel as would hinder his interference. That she was justified in freeing herself from what she considered a bondage, there can be no question, but this is not the matter involved here, but whether this result had been brought about by unkindness. On the whole, then, it cannot be said that Mr. Boswell has put the matter too strongly, and his view is supported by Hawkins, Miss Burney, Malone, and others.

The Reverend Mr. Wilson having dedicated to him his "Archeological Dictionary," that mark of respect was thus acknowledged.

To the Reverend Mr. WILSON, Clitheroe, Lancashire

"REVEREND SIR,—That I have long omitted to return you thanks for the honour conferred upon me by your Dedication, I intreat you with great earnestness not to consider as more faulty than it is. A very importunate and oppressive disorder has for some time debarred me from the pleasures, and obstructed me in the duties of life. The esteem and kindness of wise and good men is one of the last pleasures which I can be content to lose, and gratitude to those from whom this pleasure is received, is a duty of which I hope never to be reproached with the final neglect. I therefore now return you thanks for the notice which I have received from you, and which I consider as giving to my name not only more bulk, but more weight, not only as extending its superficies, but as increasing its value. Your book was evidently wanted, and will, I hope, find its way into the school, to which, however, I do not mean to confine it; for no man has so much skill in ancient rites and practices as not to want it. As I suppose myself to owe part of your kindness to my excellent friend Dr. Patten, he has likewise a just claim to my acknowledgements, which I hope you, Sir, will transmit. There will soon appear a new edition of my Poetical Biography; if you will accept of a copy to keep me in your mind, be pleased to let me know how it may be conveniently conveyed to you. The present is small, but it is given with good will by, Reverend Sir, your most, &c

"SAM JOHNSON.

"Dec 31, 1782"

In 1783 he was more severely afflicted than ever,¹ as will appear in the course of his correspondence, but still the same ardour for literature, the same constant piety, the same kindness for his friends, and the same vivacity, both in conversation and writing, distinguished him.

Having given Dr Johnson a full account of what I was doing at Auchinleck, and particularly mentioned what I knew would please him—my having brought an old man of eighty-eight from a lonely cottage to a comfortable habitation within my enclosures, where he

¹ "Jan 15 1783 Poor Dr Johnson is said to be in a bad way with water on his chest, he is bled often, and takes

laudanum frequently, but whether by his own or better advice, I cannot say"—*Dr. Lort to Percy.*

had good neighbours near to him, I received an answer in February, of which I extract what follows :

"I am delighted with your account of your activity at Auchinleck, and wish the old gentleman, whom you have so kindly removed, may live long to promote your prosperity by his prayers You have now a new character and new duties, think on them, and practise them.

"Make an impartial estimate of your revenue, and whatever it is, live upon less Resolve never to be poor. Frugality is not only the basis of quiet, but of beneficence No man can help others that wants help himself, we must have enough before we have to spare

"I am glad to find that Mrs Boswell grows well, and hope that to keep her well, no care nor caution will be omitted. May you long live happily together.

"When you come hither, pray bring with you Baxter's Anacreon. I cannot get that edition in London "

On Friday, March 21, having arrived in London the night before, I was glad to find him at Mrs. Thrale's house, in Argyll-street, appearances of friendship between them being still kept up I was shewn into his room, and after the first salutation he said, "I am glad you are come. I am very ill." He looked pale, and was distressed with a difficulty of breathing. But he soon assumed his usual strong animated style of conversation. Seeing me now for the first time as a *Laird*, or proprietor of land, he began, "Sir, the superiority of a country-gentleman over the people upon his estate is very agreeable, and he who says he does not feel it to be agreeable, lies for it must be agreeable to have a casual superiority over those who are by nature equal with us." BOSWELL. "Yet, Sir, we see great proprietors of land who prefer living in London " JOHNSON "Why, Sir, the pleasure of living in London, the intellectual superiority that is enjoyed there, may counterbalance the other Besides, Sir, a man may prefer the state of the country-gentleman upon the whole, and yet there may never be a moment when he is willing to make the change to quit London for it " He said, "It is better to have five *per cent.* out of land than out of money, because it is more secure; but the readiness of transference, and promptness of interest, make many people rather choose the funds. Nay, there is another disadvantage belonging to land, compared with money. A man is not so much afraid of being a hard creditor as of being a hard landlord " BOSWELL. "Because there is a sort of kindly connection between a landlord and his tenants "

JOHNSON. "No, Sir, many landlords with us never see their tenants. It is because if a landlord drives away his tenants, he may not get others; whereas the demand for money is so great, it may always be lent."

He talked with regret and indignation of the factious opposition to Government at this time, and imputed it, in a great measure, to the Revolution. "Sir, (said he, in a low voice, having come nearer to me, while his old prejudices seemed to be fermenting in his mind,) this Hanoverian family is *solle* here. They have no friends. Now the Stuarts had friends who stuck by them so late as 1745. When the right of the King is not revered, there will not be reverence for those appointed by the King."

His observation that the present royal family has no friends, has been too much justified by the very ungrateful behaviour of many who were under great obligations to his Majesty, at the same time there are honourable exceptions, and the very next year after this conversation, and ever since, the King has had as extensive and generous support as ever was given to any monarch, and has had the satisfaction of knowing that he was more and more endeared to his people.

He repeated to me his verses on Mr Levett, with an emotion which gave them full effect; and then he was pleased to say, "You must be as much with me as you can. You have done me good. You cannot think how much better I am since you came in"

He sent a message to acquaint Mrs. Thrale that I was arrived. I had not seen her since her husband's death. She soon appeared, and favoured me with an invitation to stay to dinner, which I accepted. There was no other company but herself and three of her daughters, Dr. Johnson, and I. She too, said she was very glad I was come, for she was going to Bath, and should have been sorry to leave Dr. Johnson before I came. This seemed to be attentive and kind, and I who had not been informed of any change, imagined all to be as well as formerly. He was little inclined to talk at dinner, and went to sleep after it; but when he joined us in the drawing-room, he seemed revived, and was again himself.

Talking of conversation, he said, "There must, in the first place, be knowledge, there must be materials,—in the second place, there must be a command of words;—in the third place, there must be imagination, to place things in such views as they are not commonly seen in;—and in the fourth place, there must be presence of mind, and a resolution that is not to be overcome by failures; this last is an essential requisite; for want of it many people do not excel in conversation. Now I want it, I throw up the game upon losing a

trick." I wondered to hear him talk thus of himself, and said, "I don't know, Sir, how this may be, but I am sure you beat other people's cards out of their hands." I doubt whether he heard this remark. While he went on talking triumphantly, I was fixed in admiration, and said to Mrs. Thrale, "O, for short-hand to take this down."—"You'll carry it all in your head, (said he;) a long head is as good as short-hand."

It has been observed and wondered at, that Mr. Charles Fox never talked with any freedom in the presence of Dr. Johnson, though it is well known, and I myself can witness, that his conversation is various, fluent, and exceedingly agreeable.¹ Johnson's experience, however, founded him in going on thus: "Fox never talks in private company, not from any determination not to talk, but because he has not the first motion. A man who is used to the applause of the House of Commons, has no wish for that of a private company. A man accustomed to throw for a thousand pounds, if set down to throw for sixpence, would not be at the pains to count his dice. Burke's talk is the ebullition of his mind; he does not talk from a desire of distinction, but because his mind is full."

He thus curiously characterised one of our old acquaintance: "***** is a good man, Sir; but he is a vain man, and a liar. He, however, only tells lies of vanity, of victories, for instance, in conversation which never happened." This alluded to a story which I had repeated from that gentleman, to entertain Johnson with its wild bravado: "This Johnson, Sir, (said he,) whom you are all afraid of, will shrink if you come close to him in argument, and roar as loud as he. He once maintained the paradox, that there is no beauty but in utility. 'Sir, (said I,) what say you to the peacock's tail, which is one of the most beautiful objects in nature, but would have as much utility if its feathers were all of one colour.' He *felt* what I thus produced, and had recourse to his usual expedient, ridicule, exclaiming, 'A peacock has a tail, and a fox has a tail,' and then he burst out into a laugh. 'Well, Sir, (said I, with a strong voice, looking him full in the face) you have unkenelled your fox; pursue him if you dare.' He had not a word to say, Sir." Johnson told me that this was a fiction from beginning to end.²

¹ Were I to insert all the stories which have been told of contests boldly tamed with him, imaginary victories obtained over him, of reducing him to

¹ Leslie the painter heard Lord Holland say that Fox always avoided talking with Johnson on account of his overbearing manner. He said that he "liked to be *Aut Caesar aut nullus*" "Then,"

said Johnson, to whom this was repeated, "he is *nullus* when he meets me."

² The number of asterisks show that Sheridan is intended.

After musing for some time, he said, "I wonder how I should have any enemies; for I do harm to nobody."^a BOSWELL. "In the first place, Sir, you will be pleased to recollect, that you set out with attacking the Scotch; so you got a whole nation for your enemies." JOHNSON. "Why I own, that by my definition of *oats* I meant to vex them." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, can you trace the cause of your antipathy to the Scotch?" JOHNSON. "I cannot, Sir." BOSWELL. "Old Mr. Sheridan says, it was because they sold Charles the First." JOHNSON. "Then, Sir, old Mr. Sheridan has found out a very good reason."

Surely the most obstinate and sulky nationality, the most determined aversion to this great and good man, must be cured, when he is seen thus playing with one of his prejudices, of which he candidly admitted that he could not tell the reason. It was, however, probably owing to his having had in his view the worst part of the Scottish nation, the needy adventurers, many of whom he thought were advanced beyond their merits, by means which he did not approve. Had he in his early life been in Scotland, and seen the worthy, sensible, independent gentlemen, who live rationally and hospitably at home, he never could have entertained such unfavourable and unjust notions of his fellow-subjects. And accordingly we find, that when he did visit Scotland, in the latter period of his life, he was fully sensible of all that it deserved, as I have already pointed out, when speaking of his "Journey to the Western Islands."

Next day, Saturday, March 22, I found him still at Mrs. Thrale's, but he told me that he was to go to his own house in the afternoon. He was better, but I perceived he was but an unruly patient,¹ for Dr. Pepys, who visited him, while I was with him said, "If you were *tractable*, Sir, I should prescribe for you."

and of making him own that his antagonists had the better of him in argument, my volumes would swell to an immoderate size. One instance, I find, has circulated both in conversation and in print, that when he would not allow the Scotch writers to have merit, the late Dr. Rose, of Chawick, asserted, that he could name one Scotch writer, who Dr. Johnson himself would allow to have written better than any man of the age; and upon Johnson's asking who it was, answered, "Lord Bute, when he signed the warrant for your pension." Upon which Johnson, struck with the repartee, acknowledged that this was true. When I mentioned it to Johnson, "Sir, (said he,) if Rose said this, I never heard it."

^a This reflection was very natural in a man of a good heart, who was not conscious of any ill-will to mankind, though the sharp sayings which were sometimes produced by his discrimination and vivacity, and which he perhaps did not recollect, were, I am afraid, too often remembered with resentment.

Second Edition.—Line 28: "Dr. Pepys" altered to "Sir Lucas Pepys."

¹ Down at Brighton he had been so rough to his physician as to drive him from the house.—*D'Arbley*.

I related to him a remark which a respectable friend had made to me, upon the then state of Government, when those who had been long in opposition had attained to power, it was supposed against the inclination of the Sovereign. "You need not be uneasy (said this gentleman) about the King. He laughs at them all; he plays them one against another." JOHNSON. "Don't think so, Sir. The King is as much oppressed as a man can be. If he plays them one against another he *wins* nothing."

I had paid a visit to General Oglethorpe in the morning, and was told by him that Dr. Johnson saw company on Saturday evenings, and he would meet me at Johnson's, that night. When I mentioned this to Johnson, not doubting that it would please him, as he had a great value for Oglethorpe, the fretfulness of his disease unexpectedly shewed itself, his anger suddenly kindled, and he said, with vehemence, "Did not you tell him not to come? Am I to be *hunted* in this manner?" I satisfied him that I could not divine that the visit would not be convenient, and that I certainly could not take it upon me of my own accord, to forbid the General

I found Dr. Johnson in the evening in Mrs. Williams's room, at tea and coffee with her and Mrs. Desmoulins, who were also both ill, it was a sad scene, and he was not in a very good humour. He said of a performance that had lately come out, "Sir, if you should search all the mad-houses in England, you would not find ten men who would write so, and think it sense."

I was glad when General Oglethorpe's arrival was announced, and we left the ladies. Dr. Johnson attended him in the parlour, and was as courteous as ever. The General said he was busy reading the writers of the middle age. Johnson said they were very curious. OGLETHORPE. "The House of Commons has usurped the power of the nation's money, and used it tyrannically. Government is now carried on by corrupt influence, instead of the inherent right in the King." JOHNSON. "Sir, the want of inherent right in the King occasions all this disturbance. What we did at the Revolution was necessary: but it broke our constitution."^a OGLETHORPE. "My father did not think it necessary."

On Sunday, March 23, I breakfasted with Dr. Johnson, who seemed much relieved, having taken opium the night before. He however protested against it, as a remedy that should be given with

^a I have, in my "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," fully expressed my sentiments upon this subject. The Revolution was *necessary*, but not a subject for *glory*, because it for a long time blasted the generous feelings of *Loyalty*. And now, when by the b malignant effect of time the present Royal Family are established in our *affections*, how unwise is it to revive by celebrations the memory of a shock, which it would surely have been better that our constitution had not required.

the utmost reluctance, and only in extreme necessity. I mentioned how commonly it was used in Turkey, and therefore it could not be so pernicious as he apprehended. He grew warm, and said, "Turks take opium, and Christians take opium; but Russel, in his account of Aleppo, tells us, that it is as disgraceful in Turkey to take too much opium, as it is with us to get drunk Sir, it is amazing how things are exaggerated. A gentleman was lately telling in a company where I was present, that in France, as soon as a man of fashion marries, he takes an opera girl into keeping; and this he mentioned as a general custom. Pray, Sir, (said I,) how many opera girls may there be? He answered, 'About fourscore.' Well then, Sir, (said I,) you see there can be no more than fourscore men of fashion who can do this."

Mrs. Desmoulins made tea, and she and I talked before him upon a topic which he had once borne patiently from me, when we were by ourselves—his not complaining of the world, because he was not called to some great office, nor had attained to great wealth. He flew into a violent passion, I confess with some justice, and commanded us to have done. "Nobody (said he) has a right to talk in this manner, to bring before a man his own character, and the events of his life, when he does not choose it should be done. I never have sought the world; the world was not to seek me. It is rather wonderful that so much has been done for me. All the complaints which are made of the world are unjust. I never knew a man of merit neglected. It was generally by his own fault that he failed of success. A man may hide his head in a hole. He may go into the country, and publish a book now and then, which nobody reads, and then complain he is neglected. There is no reason why any person should exert himself for a man who has written a good book. He has not written it for any individual. I may as well make a present to the post-man who brings me a letter. When patronage was limited, an authour expected to find a Mæcenas and complained if he did not find one. Why should he complain? This Mæcenas has others as good as he, or others who have got the start of him." BOSWELL. "But surely, Sir, you will allow that there are many men of merit at the bar who never get practice." JOHNSON. "Sir, you are sure that practice is got from an opinion that the person employed deserves it best; so that if a man of merit at the bar does not get practice, it is from error, not from injustice. He is not neglected. A horse that is brought to market may not be bought, though he is a very good horse: but that is from ignorance, not from intention."

There was in this discourse much novelty, ingenuity, and dis-

crimination, such as is seldom to be found. Yet I cannot help thinking that men of merit, who have no success in life, may be forgiven for *lamenting*, if they are not allowed to *complain*. They may consider it as *hard* that their merit should not have its suitable distinction. If there is no internal injustice towards them on the part of the world, because their merit has not been perceived, they may repine against *fortune*, or *fate*, or by whatever name they choose to call the supposed mythological power of *Destiny*. It has, however, occurred to me, as a consolatory thought, that men of merit should consider thus:—How much harder would it be if the same men had both all the merit and all the prosperity? Would not this be a miserable distribution for the poor dunces? Would men of merit exchange their intellectual superiority, and the enjoyments arising from it, for external distinction, and the pleasures of wealth? If they would not, let them not envy others, who are poor where they are rich, a compensation which is made to them.¹ Let them look inwards and be satisfied; recollecting with conscious pride what Virgil finely says of the *Corycius Senex*, and which I have, in another place,* with truth and sincerity applied to Mr. Burke.

“*Regum aquabat opes animis*”

On the subject of the right employment of wealth, Johnson observed, “A man cannot make a bad use of his money, so far as regards Society, if he does not hoard it. For if he either spends it or lends it out, Society has the benefit. It is in general better to spend money than to give it away; for industry is more promoted by spending money, than by giving it away. A man who spends

* Letter to the People of Scotland against the Attempt to diminish the Number of the Lords of Session. 1785
Cor. et Ad.—Line 5. For “internal” read “unintentional.”

¹ When this passage was written, which was about the year 1789, Boswell was very despondent as to his own professional and political prospects. The Chancellor had not behaved as he had expected. . . . “But what can be done to deaden the ambition which has ever raged in my veins like a fever. . . . Dundas, though he *pledged* himself to assist me in advancing in promotion, yet, except when I, in a manner, *compelled him to dine with me last winter*, has entirely avoided me, and I strongly suspect has given Pitt a prejudice against me.” Dundas’s treatment of him was

scarcely surprising, considering what he had written of him four years before “But scandal says Mr. Henry Dundas has been applied to by some of the judges, who, after feasting at Bayly’s French tavern, and raising their spirits high with wine, have formed the lofty wish of paying their court to *regina pecunia*; and Mr. Henry Dundas, sometimes called Harry the Ninth, has nodded assent. . . who has made a distinguished figure at more markets than one, whether at Oxford market, with Lord North, or Leadenhall market, with Mr. Pitt.”

his money is sure he is doing good with it: he is not so sure when he gives it away. A man who spends ten thousand a year will do more good than a man who spends two thousand and gives away eight."

In the evening I came to him again. He was rather fretful from his illness. A gentleman asked him, whether he had been abroad to-day. "Don't talk so childishly, (said he). You may as well ask if I hanged myself to-day." I mentioned politicks. JOHNSON. "Sir, I'd as soon have a man to break my bones as talk to me of publick affairs, internal or external. I have lived to see things all as bad as they can be"

Having mentioned his friend the second Lord Southwell, he said, "Lord Southwell was the highest bred man without insolence that I ever was in company with; the most *qualified* I ever saw. Lord Orrery was not dignified: Lord Chesterfield was, but he was insolent. Lord *****¹ is a man of coarse manners, but a man of abilities and information. I don't say he is a man I would set at the head of a nation, though perhaps he may be as good as the next Prime Minister that comes. But he is a man to be at the head of a Club,—I don't say *our* CLUB,—for there's no such Club." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, was not he once a factious man?" JOHNSON. "O yes, Sir, as factious a fellow as could be found one who was for sinking us all into the mob." BOSWELL. "How then, Sir, did he get into favour with the King?" JOHNSON. "Because, Sir, I suppose he promised the King to do whatever the King pleased."

He said, "Goldsmith's blundering speech to Lord Shelburne, which has been so often mentioned, and which he really did make to him, was only a blunder in emphasis.—I wonder they should call your Lordship *Malagrida*, for *Malagrida* was a very good man;—meant, I wonder they should use *Malagrida* as a term of reproach."

Soon after this time I had an opportunity of seeing, by means of one of his friends, a proof that his talents, as well as his obliging service to authors, were ready as ever. He had revised "The Village," an admirable poem, by the Reverend Mr. Crabbe. Its sentiments as to the false notions of rustick happiness and rustick virtue, were quite congenial with his own, and he had taken the trouble not only to suggest slight corrections and variations, but to

Cor. at Ad—Line 5. For "rather" read "somewhat."

Ibid—Line 14. For "*qualified*" read "*qualified*."

¹ Shelburne.

furnish some lines, when he thought he could give the writer's meaning better than in the words of the manuscript.*

On Sunday, March 30, I found him at home in the evening, and had the pleasure to meet with Dr. Brocklesby, whose reading, and knowledge of life, and good spirits, supply him with a never-failing source of conversation. He mentioned a respectable gentleman, who became extremely penurious near the close of his life. Johnson said there must have been a degree of madness about him. "Not at all Sir, (said Dr Brocklesby,) his judgement was entire." Unluckily, however, he mentioned that although he had a fortune of twenty-seven thousand pounds, he denied himself many comforts, from an apprehension that he could not afford them "Nay, Sir, (cried Johnson,) when the judgement is so disturbed that a man cannot count, that is pretty well."

* I shall give an instance, marking the original by Roman, and Johnson's substitution in Italic characters.

"In fairer scenes, where peaceful pleasures spring,
Tityrus, the pride of Mantuan swains, might sing :
But charm'd by him, or smitten with his views,
Shall modern poets court the Mantuan muse ?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where Fancy leads, or Virgil leads the way ?"

"On Mincio's banks, in Cæsar's boundless reign,
If Tityrus found the golden age again,
Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
Mechanick echos of the Mantuan song ?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where Virgil, not where Fancy, leads the way"

Here we find Johnson's poetical and critical powers undiminished. I must, however, observe, that the aids he gave to this poem, as to "The Traveller" and "Deserted Village" of Goldsmith, were so small as by no means to impair the distinguished merit of the authour

Second Edition — Last verse but one of the quoted lines, printed in Roman letters.

